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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: EXPLORING THE
EXPERIENCES AND SUCCESSES OF WOMEN LEADERS
IN HOMELAND SECURITY**

by

Jonna West

March 2013

Thesis Advisor:
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**THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES AND
SUCSESSES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN HOMELAND SECURITY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

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ABSTRACT

Today, women constitute over 50% of the United States' population. Yet, women are still a minority in many workforce fields, including homeland security. A woman currently leads the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and women have achieved high levels of leadership within the federal homeland security apparatus. While great strides are being made, women are still clearly the minority and hold an average of 20% of leadership positions in homeland security related professions, such as law enforcement, fire, and emergency management. These numbers do not reflect the success that women who achieve leadership positions in the homeland security profession experience. Qualitative research was conducted through personal interviews with 14 women who currently hold, or have previously held, top leadership positions in federal, state or local agencies with homeland security responsibilities. Data gathered from these interviews shows that women are succeeding in homeland security leadership positions due to various factors including experience, education, the influence of strong mentors and role models, personality traits like tenacity and confidence, having vision, and their ability to overcome obstacles and barriers and take advantage of opportunities available to them.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CHDS	Center for Homeland Defense and Security
CPL	Center for Public Leadership
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
NEMA	National Emergency Management Association
SES	Senior Executive Service

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Today, women comprise over 50% of the United States' (U.S.) population. Yet, women are still a minority in many workforce fields, including homeland security. A woman currently leads the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and women have achieved high levels of leadership within the federal homeland security apparatus. While great strides are being made, women are still clearly the minority and hold an average of 20% of leadership positions in homeland security related professions, such as law enforcement, fire, and emergency management.

If women comprise over half the population of the country, they should be more involved in policy and decision making. Women should be contributing to policy discussions at every level of government. This thesis focuses on the experiences and successes of some of the women who hold, or have held, high-ranking leadership positions in the homeland security profession. The research is intended to lead to mechanisms that increase the number and successes of female leaders in homeland security.

Research Method

Quantitative analysis was used to evaluate demographic data about women in homeland security leadership positions. Grounded theory was used to identify patterns and hypothesis about women leaders in homeland security to answer the research questions: "Are women succeeding in homeland security leadership;" and "What reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security?" The research began with the idea that women currently play a strong role in homeland security leadership, and that they are successful in those roles. Data regarding this issue were collected from systematic research on homeland security leadership to develop hypotheses regarding why women are successful in homeland security leadership.

Interviews were conducted with 14 women who currently hold, or previously held, leadership positions within federal, state and local agencies with homeland security related agencies. For purposes of this study, agencies included the U.S. DHS and its component agencies, state and local emergency management and homeland security agencies, law enforcement agencies and fire services. Interviews followed a series of 50 carefully scripted questions and lasted an average of one hour each, with some taking longer and some being shorter. Twenty-eight women were invited to participate in this research. Two individuals declined to participate, four responded but were never scheduled due to various factors, eight individuals never responded to the invitation, and fourteen completed interviews.

Are Women Succeeding in Homeland Security Leadership?

It is relatively easy to identify that women play a significantly smaller role in homeland security professions than men. When reviewing Bureau of Labor Statistics, Women in the Labor Force Databook, data were captured from various employment sectors considered part of the homeland security enterprise. On the high side, women comprised 33.3% or one third of all emergency medical technicians and paramedics in 2011. On the low side, excluding those in emergency management supervision that were too small of fields to measure, only 2.3% of fire fighter supervisors are women. When the total number of people employed in homeland security related professions is calculated, including emergency medical services, emergency management, law enforcement, and fire services, homeland security professions employ approximately 1.4 million people in the United States, with approximately 204,000 (14.7%) of them being women. Success is difficult to define, and as one interview subject indicated, the definition of success “lies in the eyes of the beholder.” The demographic analysis indicated that women hold less than 20% of the jobs in homeland security related professions, which is based on information from the 2011 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. This information may not be an indicator of women’s success in the career field, but it does clearly define them as the minority.

Five general themes on how these women define success as a leader were found from the interview responses: Success depends on their influence, if they complete the mission, if they make a tangible difference or contribution, whether they have vision, if they lead a healthy and effective organization, and how others perceive them. Of the 14 women interviewed, 13 felt that they considered themselves a successful homeland security leader, and they each had their own ways on how their success was measured.

Based on the qualitative analysis of these interviews, women are succeeding in homeland security leadership positions. The low percentage of women in the homeland security profession, however, suggests that woman may not be succeeding in achieving careers in homeland security that would lead them to acquire leadership positions within the profession.

What Reasons Can Explain their Success?

While each woman interviewed had different experiences and credited different factors as contributing to success, several common themes emerged from the analysis of the data presented. To describe the most common reasons, findings are grouped into seven overarching areas, which are described more in detail in the findings and recommendations chapter.

- Having Strong and Influential Mentors
- Having the Right Experience
- Having the Right Education
- Having a Clear Vision
- Possessing Strong Leadership Skills and Traits
- Overcoming Obstacles and Barriers
- Taking Advantage of Opportunities

Conclusion

Challenges, barriers, and obstacles still exist for women today, especially in male-dominated fields, such as those in the homeland security enterprise. The women

interviewed who have encountered barriers and obstacles simply did not let them stop them. Others encountered more difficulty when trying to do that, and for some, the barriers have proven to be unbreakable, but they are still trying.

Fewer women hold leadership positions in homeland security mainly because fewer women work in the profession. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports, in 2011, 26.6% of all law enforcement employees in the United States were women, and only 11.8% of police officers are women.¹ Only four, or 8%, state homeland security advisors are women according to the DHS website listing these advisors.² Likewise, only four women serve as state emergency management directors according to a directory acquired from the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA).³ Only 4% of full-time firefighters in the United States are women. Until more women are employed in the homeland security professions, the number of female leaders in the profession will logically remain low.

The workforce is changing. As the population changes, and as more women recognize that homeland security is a viable career option, they will enter the profession. For that to happen, homeland security must be marketed as a serious career option to women, which should occur in school classrooms and college campuses. The women who have made it as leaders in this profession are role models to others, and can reach other women and inspire them to enter professions that may not enter their sphere of possibility.

Statistics provided by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security indicate that fewer women are applying for the master's program than men. Only 19.8% of all applicants to the program are women. However, 39% of the women who apply for the program are admitted, while 31% of men who apply are admitted. According to staff at

¹ FBI Uniform Crime Reports, "Crime in the U.S. 2011, Full Time Law Enforcement Employees," (n.d.), http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table_74_full-time_law_enforcement_employees_by_population_group_percent_male_and_female_2011.xls.

² Department of Homeland Security, "State Homeland Security Advisors, Points of Contacts," (n.d.), <http://www.dhs.gov/state-homeland-security-contacts>.

³ State Director list acquired from the National Emergency Management Association.

the center, no variable scored for gender in the application process exists, which means that the women who apply to the program are preparing strong applications, and come with strong credentials, background, and recommendations. This data should be encouraging for any woman in the homeland security profession who considers pursuing this opportunity for an advanced degree. Considering that many of the women interviewed state that education and experience are essential contributing factors to succeeding in this field, the opportunity is one that will greatly benefit women as they pursue careers in homeland security.

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To my Mom, who has been my inspiration, and is a shining example of strength in adversity. For a woman who has experienced so much loss, she has never lost her faith, or her love of life. No obstacles have held her back, and no stones have broken her. I love you Mom, and I pray that I will live up to the example you have set for me.

I will be forever grateful for my Dad, whom I lost over 12 years ago, but who walks beside me in every journey. A life-long law enforcement officer and public servant, he taught me what it means to serve, what it means to be loyal, and what it means to fight for what you believe in. I think he would be proud of this work, because he always told me I could be or do anything I want. Thank you Dad, for raising me to believe that I did not have to be the fairy princess; I could be the hero too.

For my many friends and co-workers at the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), I owe you so much more than thanks. While I was away working on coursework, attending classes, and trying to complete this thesis, they stepped in and handled things I should have. Especially my friend, confidante and mentor Donna Burns, who not only filled in for me so often, but also helped me through this entire process.

Without the support and encouragement of my director and friend, Charley English, this journey would never have begun. Charley encouraged me to apply for this program for years, and always supported me. He also allowed me the freedom to choose a thesis topic that was important to me. He allowed me to take a risk and do something different, and was willing to walk out on that limb with me. For that, I will be forever grateful. I am humbled and honored by your support and belief in me Charley.

I owe my thanks and gratitude to my thesis advisor Kathleen Kiernan and reader Chris Bellavita. Both helped me understand what it means to conduct real research and ask the tough questions. Dr. Kiernan inspired me to do my part to “change the world” and I hope this work will inspire others to do the same. Dr. Bellavita is the epitome of what a critical thinker should be, and without his brilliant *Enhanced Inquiry Techniques*, this journey would be much less meaningful. Thank you both for your sometimes brutal honesty, but unwavering support.

The Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) faculty and staff provided an education, and educational experience that cannot be adequately described in this brief acknowledgement. Staff at the center provided unequivocal support to us throughout the entire program, on weekends, at night, no matter what. They answered to every need we had, and made sure we always knew they were just a phone call away. The faculty, while all world-class experts in their professions, were approachable, available, and always willing to listen and help us through our issues, and we always had issues. Thank you for the patience, understanding and willingness to share your extensive knowledge and experience with us.

It is because of the relationships developed and strong bonds made with my classmates that I have grown to understand what it takes to do this work. These classmates, along with the amazing faculty in the program, helped me find my voice, face my fears, and get out on the ledge to make a difference. You are all my brothers and sisters, and our bonds will last a lifetime. Thank you for your friendship.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to the 14 leaders who gave their time to participate in this research, and completed an interview. These amazing women, who are each extremely busy leaders, gave me more time and information than I expected, and answered my questions with honesty and patience. In the name of research, without any expectations, agendas or personal gain, they shared experiences and stories that left me at times awestruck, but always inspired. To those leaders, named and unnamed, I say thank you. Thank you for paving the way.

I. INTRODUCTION

In June 2012, an article appeared in *The Atlantic Magazine* entitled “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All.”⁴ The article caused a great deal of controversy and prompted the age-old question about gender equality and the battle of the sexes. The point of the article was that even though gender equality has greatly progressed over time, women still really cannot “have it all.” The author, Anne-Marie Slaughter, further explained that feminists have misled professional women into believing they could have it all, and that women who wanted to have it all, but were not able to achieve it, were left feeling like failures because they were led to believe they could if only they were committed and worked hard enough.

At the time, it was surprising to see such an article, and for it to garner so much attention, both positive and negative. Gender equality is not talked about frequently in many professional circles. In fact, often when the topic does come up, it is generally followed by discussions about feminism in general, and is often accompanied by negative responses. The article from *The Atlantic Magazine* will be discussed more later, but first, it is important to explain the purpose of this thesis, and describe the road that brought the author to studying this topic.

Entering the Master’s degree program at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security was the beginning of a fantastic journey. Upon acceptance to the program, within just a few short weeks, the students were notified of their class, and were able to be “introduced” online to their cohort-mates. The cohort in which the author of this thesis belongs, 1105/1106, consisted of 30 people. Coincidentally, out of that distinguished group of 30, 25 were male and five were female, which included the author. At that time, that distinction was unremarkable and not surprising. Public safety has traditionally been, and still is, a male-dominated profession. However, as the program progressed, it became more relevant to ascertain why more women were not there. Just a quick glance at

⁴ Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All,” *The Atlantic Magazine*, July/August 2012.

pictures of previous graduating classes indicated that the numbers of females in each cohort was low, some more than others. Were women not being accepted to the program as often as men, or were women simply not applying as frequently as men? The latter was confirmed to be true, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

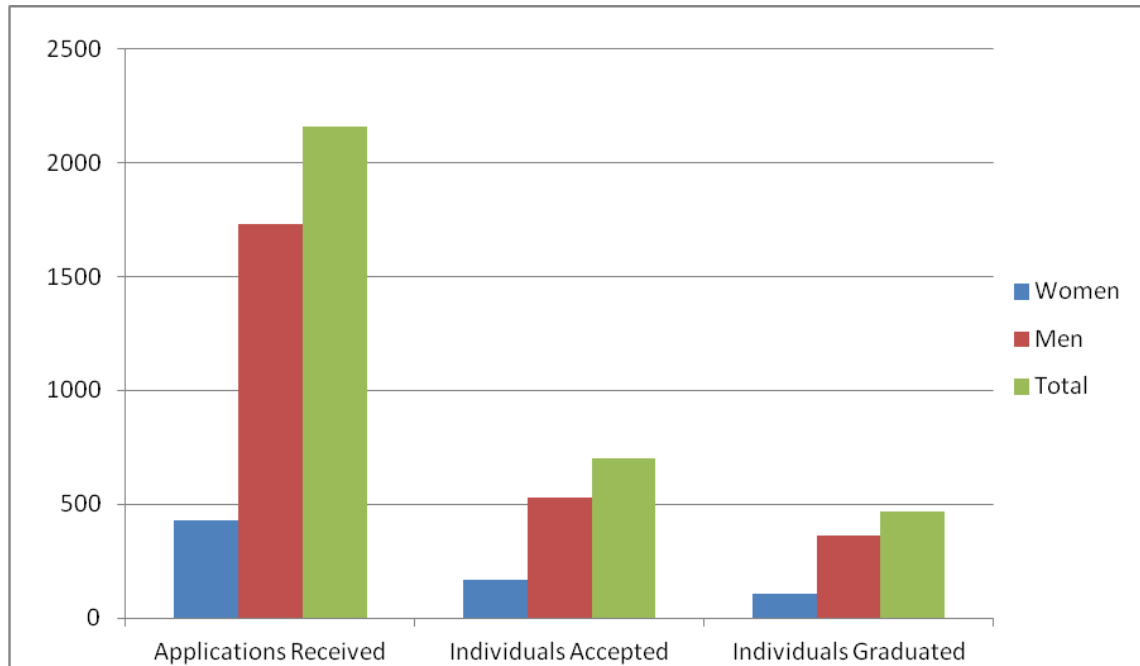


Figure 1. Participants, by Gender, in the Center for Homeland Defense and Security Master's Program

Additionally, often in day-to-day meetings, noticeably fewer senior level women than men are seated at the table in homeland security related events. That is not to say that women were not in attendance, they were. It was just common for participants “around the table” to include approximately 20% women. A quick analysis of organizational leadership of agencies—federal, state and local—that comprise the homeland security infrastructure shows fewer women in top leadership positions than men. Just through deduction, it becomes clear why fewer women were applying to the Master's program. Fewer women were in positions to apply.

When contemplating a thesis topic, the author originally envisioned conducting research on homeland security leadership. It is important to identify and develop the

types of leaders that can pull this country through the wicked problem of terrorism, and what is called homeland security. This research would include reviews of leadership traits, challenges, and general characteristics of successful leaders. However, so much literature is available about leaders and leadership that it would be a challenge to contribute anything new to the discussion. Several great theses had already reviewed homeland security leadership, and it was difficult to envision adding new material to that area. During this contemplation, a member of the CHDS faculty, who some consider to be an expert on leadership, suggested writing a thesis on women leaders in homeland security. That suggestion started this journey.

Initially, this topic held little appeal and was quickly discounted from serious deliberation. Fear of being labeled as a feminist was among the top concerns when considering conducting research in this area. As a proud woman, the author wants to be judged on her experience, knowledge, skills, and character, not by gender. Additionally, in some professional circles, when people make gender an issue, it becomes an even bigger issue. Being labeled and associated with the image of a bra-burning feminist is a concern. Often, these labels and images can impact careers. Raised in a law enforcement family, whose father was a career law enforcement officer, the author of this thesis was raised to believe that gender did not matter. What matters are character, dedication, skill, and commitment. No doors should be closed based on gender. Opportunities should not be blocked based on gender. Therefore, contemplating writing a thesis about gender equality was something that caused internal strife. It was difficult to envision that a study about gender equality did not have to be a bad thing. Instead, such a thesis could be positive and encouraging, to both men and women.

Talking with various individuals, both men and women, proved that the topic is polarizing. Some strongly suggested staying away from the topic to protect a successful career path. Clearly, reviewing this subject would require careful navigation. Others, again both male and female, thought it was a wonderful topic and a great opportunity to conduct novel research and contribute to leadership and gender studies literature. Still, more evaluation was needed to make an informed decision about pursuing this research.

A short literature review on the subject was completed and led to the decision to pursue this thesis topic. Many areas were available for research surrounding this topic, and each one promised to make a difference in gender studies and homeland security leadership practices.

Various negative and positive responses are still encountered when discussing this topic. Being referred to as a feminist is at times uncomfortable, especially when used in a negative context, but it is not always so. Considering that the definition of the term feminism is “the belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes,”⁵ perhaps being referred to as such is not negative at all. This author does believe in equal rights for all genders and all races. Why don’t we all? This thesis does not advocate for “better” treatment for one gender. The agenda is to explore. To talk to women who have been, or are, leaders in homeland security, and appear from the outside, to “have it all.” To learn from them and their experiences, and to ascertain if they have experienced success in their positions, what has contributed to that success, and what obstacles they have, and may still, encounter along the way. The research is about equality among all sexes. This research is intended to demonstrate that homeland security is a profession where the doors are open to all, regardless of gender, and that through those doors, some amazing leaders, who just so happen to be women, have walked and blazed a trail for others to follow. It is up to others to do so.

Concerning the article in *The Atlantic Magazine*. Is the author right? Are women unable to “have it all?” Judge for yourself, but it may depend on how “having it all” is defined. That term is subjective and very personal. Most of the leaders interviewed for this thesis appear to have it all. Did they make sacrifices? They absolutely did. Have they worked hard to achieve their success? They definitely have. Do they have lives outside of work? Yes they do. Having it all is still possible. It is not easy, and it is a choice. That is true for any profession, and for any gender.

⁵ *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 502.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

What role have women played in homeland security leadership? Not only is the head of the U.S. DHS a woman, but a noteworthy portion of America's homeland security is led by women.⁶ Within the U.S. DHS and its component agencies, women hold 27% of the top leadership positions.⁷ In other public safety related professions, such as law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, law and the military, women hold small percentages of top leadership positions. Women are a majority of the electorate in the United States, but only hold 18% of congressional seats, and approximately 24% of state legislative positions.⁸ However, women are making strides. Just this January, the United States made history when 20 women were sworn into the Senate.⁹ At the same time that women are making strides in some areas, it appears they are making less progress in others. At the same time that the number of women in the U.S. Senate was being celebrated, President Obama was criticized for not having enough diversity in his inner circle of advisors.¹⁰ The United States is behind the United Kingdom, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Canada, Australia, Afghanistan, Cuba, United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan in comparison to the proportion of women in national legislatures.¹¹ In the United States, only five females are governors, and women hold only 17% of mayoral seats in cities with populations over 30,000.¹²

⁶ Rich Cooper, "Protecting America: Women Leaders in the Homeland Security Arena," *Defense Media Network*, October 19, 2010, <http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/protecting-america/>.

⁷ DHS leadership listed on DHS website at www.dhs.gov.

⁸ Rutgers, Center for Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, "Current Number of Women Officeholders," (n.d.), http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/Current_Numbers.php.

⁹ Suzi Parker, "Women Make Historic Gains in the U.S. Senate," *Washington Post*, November 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2012/11/07/women-make-historic-gains-in-the-u-s-senate/>.

¹⁰ Ian Simpson, "America's First Black President Criticized for White Male Cabinet," January 10, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/11/us-obama-diversity-idUSBRE90A01T20130111>.

¹¹ The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership," November 2009, <http://www.benchmarks.thewhitehouseproject.org>, 12.

¹² Rutgers, Center for Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, "Current Number of Women Officeholders."

Small numbers of women work in the areas of law enforcement, firefighting and emergency management. In these areas, women often hold clerical and non-policy making positions.¹³ Law is another area in which men are more prominent in leadership roles than women. Women comprise only 25% of U.S. District Court judges, only 26% of state court judges, 27% of U.S. Court of Appeals judges, and 22% of U.S. Supreme Court justices.¹⁴ In the area of law enforcement, only 1% of all the police chiefs in the United States are women.¹⁵ The military is no exception. Even though 70% of Americans are comfortable with women serving as generals, women only hold 11% of the top leadership positions in the military.¹⁶ An almost equal representation of men and women occurs in leading law schools, public policy schools, and medical schools. However, only 16% of partners in major law firms are women. The business world also has low numbers of women in top leadership positions. While a third of those completing business schools are women, less than 2% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women.¹⁷

If research shows that women experience significant success in leadership positions in homeland security, it would be beneficial to examine why that may be so. Research findings could potentially lead to mechanisms that increase the number and successes of female leaders in other disciplines.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are women succeeding in homeland security leadership positions?
- If so, what reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security?

¹³ Lai Sun M. Yee, "Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 40.

¹⁴ The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership," 62.

¹⁵ Cooper, "Protecting America: Women Leaders in the Homeland Security Arena."

¹⁶ The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership," 7–9.

¹⁷ María Cristina Caballero, "The Challenges of Women's Leadership," *Harvard University Gazette*, March 16, 2006, <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/03.16/05-womenlead.html>.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. FEMALE LEADERS IN HOMELAND SECURITY PROFESSIONS

“Closing the leadership gap between men and women is one of the central challenges of this century,” said David Gergen, director of Harvard University’s Center for Public Leadership (CPL), at a Kennedy School conference on women’s leadership.¹⁸ While the number of women has exceeded the number of men in the United States, men still have the edge when it comes to leadership roles. The 2010 U.S. Census found that of the 157 million people in the United States, 50.8% are female, while 49.2% are male.¹⁹ Even though women are participating at equal, and in some cases higher, numbers in the workforce than men, few make it to the top.²⁰

A 2008 Pew Research Center study shows that the public believes that women have what it takes to be today’s leaders.²¹ Poll data shows that 75% of Americans are comfortable with a woman president, and 82% are comfortable with a woman vice president. Over 90% of Americans are comfortable with women as members of Congress.²²

If the public is comfortable with women leading the highest political offices of the country, and if women have equal numbers in today’s workforce, why are so few women in leadership positions? The literature offers several reasons why, as well as challenges encountered by women in leadership positions.

Women hold high leadership positions in America’s homeland security apparatus.²³ Women hold the top two positions at the DHS. The gender of these leaders

¹⁸ Caballero, “The Challenges of Women’s Leadership.”

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, “2010 Census Shows Nation’s Population Is Aging,” *News Release*, May 26, 2011, http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb11-cn147.html.

²⁰ The White House Project Report, “Benchmarking Women’s Leadership,” 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²² *Ibid.*, 7.

²³ Cooper, “Protecting America: Women Leaders in the Homeland Security Arena.”

was never a source of public debate or concern during their Senate confirmation hearings. During their confirmation processes, their proven track records and ability to do the job was discussed.²⁴ In addition, women hold important homeland security roles in numerous other senior positions, and throughout state, local, tribal and private sector organizations.²⁵

B. OBSTACLES FOR WOMEN TO ACHIEVE LEADERSHIP ROLES

What are the obstacles or issues contributing to the low numbers of women in leadership positions? The literature describes several possible reasons.

Gender discrimination, resistance to change and “old boys club” are cited as obstacles. For example, the biggest barrier to women in the legal profession is from unconscious stereotypes, inadequate access to support networks, inflexible workplace structures, and sexual harassment.²⁶ Minority women cited the lack of influential mentors, informal networking, role models, and high visibility assignments as the primary barriers to advancement.²⁷ Women’s family responsibilities and shortage of experience are also mentioned as reasons that keep women from achieving the highest levels of leadership.²⁸

Women are also more likely to leave their jobs than men, which makes their road to the top take longer. Research shows that while these women leave their jobs for a short term, they try to get back later. Family responsibilities are the greatest reasons why women leave their jobs.²⁹ However, emerging leaders do not necessarily hold to the traditional view that leadership requires significant interpersonal and relationship sacrifices. Emerging leaders tend to express strong commitment to both leadership and

²⁴ Cooper, “Protecting America: Women Leaders in the Homeland Security Arena.”

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The White House Project Report, “Benchmarking Women’s Leadership,” 84.

²⁷ Yee, “Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security,” 27.

²⁸ “Men or Women: Who’s the Better Leader? A Paradox in Public Attitudes,” August 25, 2008, Pew Research Center Publications, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/932/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader>.

²⁹ Caballero, “The Challenges of Women’s Leadership.”

interpersonal goals.³⁰ Other reasons include career dissatisfaction, eldercare, career stalls, and job demands. Women also stated that they left positions because of being passed over for promotions, as well as being underutilized and underappreciated.³¹

Other women can also be obstacles for women, and some will not help advance other women, due to the territorialism and jealousy.³² Some women may be less comfortable with female leaders than men are. For example, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discussed her surprise when one woman interviewed about Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann stated that she was not comfortable supporting a woman for president.³³ Some people believe that women just are not tough enough for politics.³⁴

C. FEMALE LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND ATTRIBUTES

Leadership traits are not gender-specific.³⁵ However, several studies have documented leadership differences in men and women, as well as some positive leadership attributes women possess. While many of these positive attributes contribute to women's successful leadership experiences, they can also be reasons why women are not always considered for top leadership roles. In a 2008 Pew Research Center study, the public rated women higher than men in five of eight character traits valued in leaders.

³⁰ Todd L. Pittinsky and Brian Welle, "Not So Lonely at the Top? The Multiple Commitments of Emerging Leaders," Faculty Research Working Papers Series, *John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*, February 2005, <http://www.harvard.edu>.

³¹ Caballero, "The Challenges of Women's Leadership."

³² Yee, "Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security," 43.

³³ Nicole Gaouette, "Clinton Seeks Women Leaders to Tackle Our Biggest Problems," *Bloomberg*, December 16, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/print/2011-12-16/clinton-seeks-women-leaders-to-tackle-our-biggest-problems-.html>.

³⁴ Pew Research Center Publications, "Men or Women: Who's the Better Leader? A Paradox in Public Attitudes."

³⁵ Cheryl Isaac, "The Next-Generation of Female Leaders Will Emerge at a Faster Pace When Women Stop Trying to 'Act Like Men,'" *Forbes*, January 27, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/worldviews/2012/01/27/the-next-generation-of-female-leaders-will-emerge-at-a-faster-pace-when-women-stop-trying-to-act-like-men/>.

Those traits were honesty, intelligence, creativity, outgoingness, and compassion. The only area in which men rated higher than women was decisiveness.³⁶

A study by Professor Judy Rosener found that men were more likely to use rewards and punishment to influence performance, whereas women created an environment that enhanced the self-worth of people, which they believed would improve performance.³⁷ Women exhibit high levels of communal qualities, including affiliation, self-sacrifice, concern, and emotional expressiveness.³⁸ Men, on the other hand, exhibit action-oriented leadership qualities like power, independence, assertiveness, and self-confidence. Those communal qualities associated with women are in conflict with the action-oriented qualities that men exhibit.³⁹ However, when women leaders begin to exhibit a more male-oriented leadership style, role conflict can occur.

Congress is another area in which women are successful, but still have few numbers. On average, women in Congress introduce more legislation, gain more co-sponsors and bring more money to their districts than male members of Congress.⁴⁰ If Congresswomen are so effective, why are they not gaining more seats of power? Uncertainty still exists among the public about women's roles as political leaders. The Pew Research Center survey also found that only 6% of survey respondents felt that women make better political leaders than men. While women were indicated to be better at dealing with social issues like health care and education, respondents believed that men were better at dealing with crime, public safety, defense, and national security.⁴¹

³⁶ The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership," 8.

³⁷ Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe, "360 Degree Feedback and Leadership Development," *Professional Forum* 6 (1998): 38–39.

³⁸ Leslie Pratch, "Why Women Leaders Need Self-Confidence," *Harvard Business Review*, November 28, 2011, http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2011/11/women_leaders_need_self-confidence.html.

³⁹ Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003): 818, <http://www.wellesley.edu/Psychology/Psych/Faculty/Carli/FemaleLeadershipAdvantage.pdf>.

⁴⁰ The White House Project Report, "Benchmarking Women's Leadership," 84.

⁴¹ Pew Research Center Publications, "Men or Women: Who's the Better Leader? A Paradox in Public Attitudes."

D. CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN LEADERS

Once women achieve leadership roles, they face some unique challenges. Women possess advantages and disadvantages as leaders, with most disadvantages occurring in male-dominated environments,⁴² which can be particularly difficult for women. One basic reason is that men have traditionally been perceived as protectors, and soldiers, police officers, and firefighters are considered protectors. However, after 9/11, the traditional idea of protector expanded to include women.⁴³ Female responders were also killed in the 9/11 attacks, which made clear that women were no longer just civilians in the war on terror. Officer Moira Smith, of the New York Police Department, was killed responding to the World Trade Center on 9/11,⁴⁴ along with Captain Kathy Mazza of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey,⁴⁵ and New York Emergency Medical Technician Yamel Merino.⁴⁶ At the Pentagon, 125 people were killed while inside the building. Of those, 70 were civilians and 55 were military service members, including a number of women.⁴⁷

Working in male-dominated environments increases men's chances of promotions, but increases women's chances of leaving their jobs.⁴⁸ Men generally do not perceive women as having the characteristics of effective managers, and therefore, women can be held back from promotional opportunities and other benefits.⁴⁹ Since

⁴² Eagly and Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," 825.

⁴³ Yee, "Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security," 9.

⁴⁴ "September 11th Hero to Have Playground Named in Her Honor," NYPD press release, March 2012, http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr_2012_911_heroine.shtml.

⁴⁵ "Thirty-Seven Port Authority Police Officers to Run in NYC Marathon in Honor of 9/11 PAPD Heroes," press release, *The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey*, October 24, 2007, http://www.panynj.gov/press-room/press-item.cfm?headline_id=919.

⁴⁶ New York State Senate, "9/11/2001 Heroes," (n.d.), <http://www.nysenate.gov/story/yamel-merino>.

⁴⁷ 9/11 Commission Report, "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States," 2002, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Ch9.pdf.

⁴⁸ Eagly and Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," 821.

⁴⁹ Alimo-Metcalfe, "360 Degree Feedback and Leadership Development," 40.

women are expected to show more competence than male counterparts, it is difficult for women to gain recognition for ability and achievements.⁵⁰

Work-life conflict is an issue for women, and continues to challenge women in the workforce. Women have historically handled a larger portion of family responsibilities even if they also work outside the home.⁵¹ Commitments to personal and family responsibilities have been cited as reasons women did not take senior leadership roles.⁵²

Women who have children seem to suffer negative career consequences, especially with regards to average lifetime earnings. Some studies have found that the average lifetime earnings of a high-skilled woman who has a child in her 20s is \$625,000. For women who have children their 30s, the average is \$750,000. However, for those women who have no children, the average lifetime earning is \$913,000.⁵³

E. POSITIVE STEPS

Mentoring programs in the branches of the U.S. military have increased the number of women officers serving in the military. In the military, some men may not feel comfortable mentoring a woman, but few senior women officers are available to mentor junior women officers.⁵⁴ These programs could be a model for homeland security.⁵⁵

The women successfully rising to the top in male-dominated environments, such as law enforcement and homeland security, do so by surviving discriminatory processes, and tend to be highly competent.⁵⁶ Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, has a key piece of advice for women dealing with the still

⁵⁰ Eagly and Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," 825.

⁵¹ Pittinsky and Welle, "Not So Lonely at the Top? The Multiple Commitments of Emerging Leaders," 4.

⁵² Ibid., 8.

⁵³ Caballero, "The Challenges of Women's Leadership."

⁵⁴ Yee, "Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security," 28.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁶ Eagly and Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," 822.

present hostility in the workplace. “Take the bashing, grit your teeth and smile, because there will be others after you.”⁵⁷ Women who are forging ahead into top leadership positions, especially in homeland security environments, must blaze a trail for other women to follow.

An increase in the number of women in homeland security would more accurately reflect the diversity of the country.⁵⁸ If women comprise over half the population of the country, they should be more involved in policy and decision making. Women should be contributing to policy discussions at every level of government. Even though women hold the top spots in the DHS, the numbers are still low throughout the leadership ranks in local, state and federal agencies across the country. In her entertaining article, “Homeland Security is for Girls,” Garance Franke-Ruta states that women still hold primary responsibility for the care and maintenance of homes. If homeland security is about protecting yourself and your home, who is better than the women who do it every day?⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Gaouette, “Clinton Seeks Women Leaders to Tackle Our Biggest Problems.”

⁵⁸ Yee, “Expanding the Talent Pool in the Area of Homeland Security,” 9.

⁵⁹ Garance Franke-Ruta, “Homeland Security Is for Girls,” *Washington Monthly*, April 2003, <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2003/0304.franke-ruta.html>.

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III. METHOD

A. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis was used to evaluate demographic data about women in homeland security leadership positions. Grounded theory was used to identify patterns and hypotheses about women leaders in homeland security to answer the question, “What reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security?” The research began with the idea that women currently play a strong role in homeland security leadership, and that they are successful in those roles. Grounded theory was used to generate data regarding this issue from systematic research on homeland security leadership. Theories were discovered to explore further in the thesis. Then, hypotheses regarding reasons why women are successful in homeland security leadership were explored.

B. GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants.⁶⁰ Interviews were conducted with 14 women who currently, or previously, held leadership positions with federal, state and local agencies with homeland security related agencies. Twenty-eight individuals were selected from a representative sample of agencies with homeland security responsibilities, and invited to participate in an interview. For purposes of this study, agencies included the DHS and its component agencies, state and local emergency management and homeland security agencies, law enforcement agencies, and fire departments.

⁶⁰ J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage Publications, Incorporated, 2008), 13.

C. DATA SAMPLE AND COLLECTION

1. Demographic Analysis

This analysis seeks to answer the questions about the number of women leaders in homeland security, and what roles they hold. Data about gender distribution of homeland security leaders were collected from various sources. Information was obtained from agency websites, as well as websites of associations and professional organizations that represent homeland security related professionals. Data were also collected from literature available through books, journals, articles, theses, and other sources.

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate whether women held high numbers of leadership positions within homeland security. No original demographic data on women in homeland security professions were collected in this study; all conclusions on demographic statistics were acquired from other published sources and official U.S. Department of Labor findings from 2011.⁶¹

2. Qualitative Analysis

Interviews were conducted over the telephone or in person where logistically feasible. Consent forms were provided to all participants, and signed consent was required before interviews could proceed. Ten participants consented to be audio recorded, while others did not. One interview subject did not consent to be recorded, and would not allow notes to be taken during the interview. In addition, seven participants consented to be identified in the research while seven did not. No reason was asked for consent or non-consent. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed where consent was provided. Subjects were given the option of participating anonymously or with attribution. Upon completion of interview transcripts, copies were provided to each subject so they had the opportunity to review them for accuracy or provide additional information.

⁶¹ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," December 2011, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook-2011.pdf>.

Interviewed subjects included representatives from the DHS and its component agencies, as well as state and local homeland security officials, to include agencies with homeland security responsibilities. These agencies included law enforcement, fire services, and emergency management (see Table 1). At the time of the interview, six subjects interviewed represented homeland security leaders from other environments, including academia and the private sector. These individuals, while no longer employed by the public sector, previously held homeland security leadership positions in local, state or federal government. Interviews were conducted with both appointed leaders and career leaders to capture both perspectives. Leaders were selected at various levels of tenure and background.

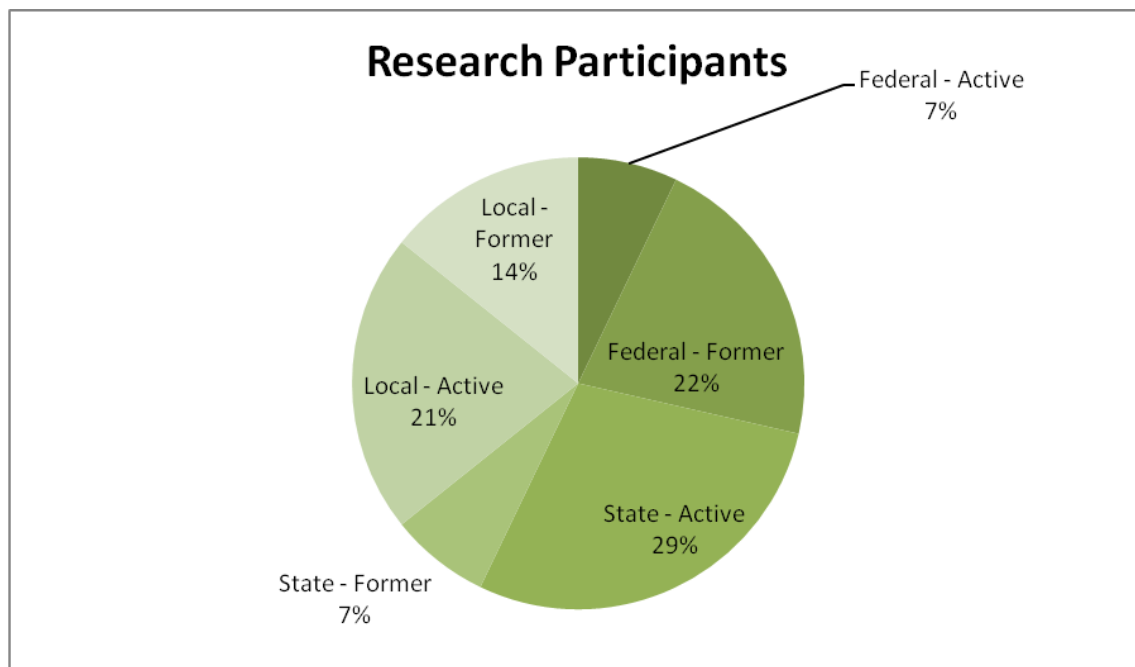


Table 1. Research Participants by Homeland Security Jurisdiction

Interviews followed carefully scripted questions as mapped in Appendix A of this thesis. Questions were provided to each interview subject in advance of the scheduled interviews. Interviews took an average of one hour each, with some taking longer and some being shorter.

Interview data was protected and stored with the researcher during the research project for security. Upon completion of the research and thesis, files will be transferred to the Naval Postgraduate School for required retention. Twenty-eight women were invited to participate in this research. Two individuals declined to participate, four responded but were never scheduled due to various factors, eight individuals never responded to the invitation, and fourteen completed interviews.

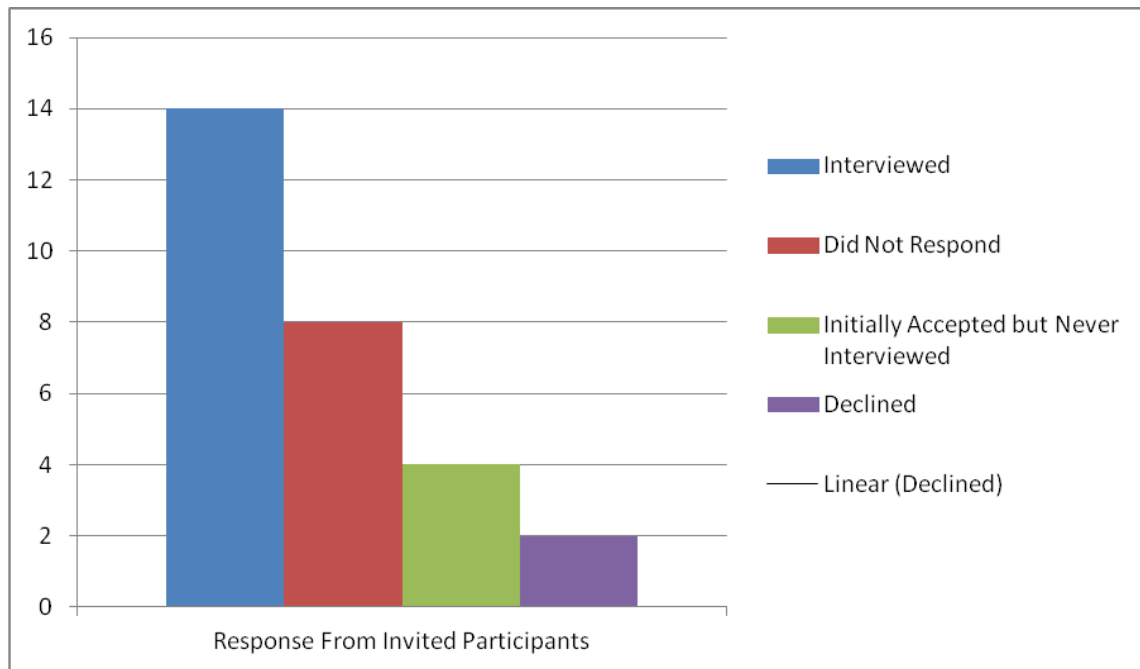


Table 2. Response from Invited Participants

D. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The sample size for this research study is small, and consists of only 14 research subjects. While 28 individuals were invited to participate in the study, only 14 actually participated. Attempts were made to increase the study sample, but time and amendments to the research protocol were barriers to increasing the sample size. To balance this limitation, the research subjects invited to participate equally represented federal, state and local homeland security related organizations, and were from geographically diverse areas of the United States.

Only women leaders were invited to participate in this research study. The purpose of this research was to gather the perspectives of female homeland security leaders and learn about their successes and experiences. Men were not invited to participate in this research, but their feedback and response to the same interviews could have provided beneficial information for comparison purposes.

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IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHICS

No quantitative statistics were collected or measured in this research study. All demographic analysis data were taken from other research sources or from the official 2011 Department of Labor's Women in the Labor Force labor statistics.⁶² For the purpose of this study, only those statistics for women in the work force fields of emergency management, emergency medical services, law enforcement, fire services, and protective services were utilized to help define homeland security related professions. This number could change if additional work force fields are included in homeland security. Table 3 breaks down those profession and lists the number of individuals employed in those profession in the United States, rounded to the nearest 1,000, and the percent of women in those fields was then calculated. For those career fields that employ less than 5,000 people, such as emergency management directors, no percentage of women's roles was available to be calculated.

It is relatively easy to identify that women play a significantly smaller role in homeland security professions than men. On the high side, women comprised 33.3% or one third of all emergency medical technicians and paramedics in 2011. On the low side, excluding those in emergency management supervision too small of fields to measure, only 2.3% of fire fighter supervisors are women. When the total number of people employed in those professions listed in Table 3 are calculated, homeland security professions employ approximately 1.4 million people in the United States, with approximately 204 thousand (14.7%) of them being women.

⁶² United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook."

OCCUPATION	TOTAL EMPLOYED	PERCENT WOMEN
Emergency Management Directors	6,000	-*
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	159,000	33.3%
Fire Fighter Supervisors	43,000	2.3%
Fire Fighters	280,000	4.2%
Police Supervisors	103,000	16.5%
Police and Sheriffs Officers	704,000	13.6%
Protective Services (All Other) Supervisors	95,000	27.3%
* Dash indicates data not shown where the employment base is less than 5,000.		

Table 3. Percentage of Women in Homeland Security Related Professions in 2011⁶³

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Management Directive 715, Equal Employment Opportunity Program Status Report, issued for Fiscal Year 2011, women comprise 31.7% of permanent full-time positions within the DHS, including its component agencies. The report also indicates that lower participation rates occur for women and non-White groups within the GS-13 through GS-15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) groups, compared to men and Whites.⁶⁴ According to the same report, the proportion of women at the senior pay levels within DHS is 28.9 percent.

B. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Grounded theory was used as a qualitative research technique to analyze the outcome of the research questions posed to a panel of individually interviewed women in homeland security leadership positions. Simple quantitative statistics were also used for some measurable questions to help identify consensus on some topics. Data from each

⁶³ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," 58–59; Data for emergency management directors found at United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Household Data, Annual Averages," (n.d.), <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Department of Homeland Security, "U.S. Department of Homeland Security Management Directive 715, Equal Employment Opportunity Program Status Report," Fiscal Year 2011, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/fy-2011-md-715-eeo-status-report_1.pdf.

interview was analyzed and coded upon completion. Coding was based on trends identified during the interviews, and identified patterns and similarities, as well as differences between the leaders. During the interviews, specific questions were asked (see Appendix A) of the selected leaders. However, the leaders were also given an opportunity to share any other information they felt was beneficial to the research.

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V. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS—GROUNDED THEORY

The research questions: “Are women succeeding in homeland security leadership positions?” and “What reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security leadership positions?” were each analyzed separately using the answers from the initial question and the answers to the more in depth secondary and tertiary follow up questions. Additional information gleaned from the interviews was also collected at the end.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION #1. ARE WOMEN SUCCEEDING IN HOMELAND SECURITY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?

To facilitate the answer to research question one, two primary questions were asked with more in depth follow on questions for each. For the first question, to help define success as a leader, the subjects were asked how they define success as a leader. Responses to this question varied across the individual interviews, but five common themes emerged.

1. Defining Success

First, several subjects believed that success as a leader depends on their influence on others, to include how they manage human capital. Success is measured by how well the organization is meeting the mission, vision, and goals set forth for the organization, and includes whether the organization is recruiting, retaining, promoting, and retiring employees. They felt successful leaders must have the experience, knowledge, and personality to motivate people to work together for a common objective to accomplish a goal or mission, which includes the ability to help people through change. Successful leaders should be able to define the mission and convey it to subordinates, and command the respect of the people working for them. They are able to assess talent, ensure that talent is in the right places, as well as nurture that talent. They validate, provide praise, and inspire those working for them and around them, make people feel comfortable, and encourage contribution. A leader is also considered successful if able to follow, as well as lead. Successful leaders also ensure everyone comes home safely. Second, the definition

of successful leadership lies in the eyes of the beholder. Several subjects indicated that success as a leader depends on how others perceive it and what others are saying. For example, a leader is successful if holding the respect of external stakeholders, and possessing the internal authority to do the job. Third, successful leaders complete the mission. To do so, they know the mission, are able to recognize when change happens, and are able to navigate through difficult situations. Specifically, in the homeland security environment, successful leaders must demonstrate that they can bring together multiple opinions, organizations, and individuals to accomplish a single or focused mission. Leaders must be flexible enough to understand all the various organizational cultures involved in the homeland security enterprise. Fourth, successful leaders make a tangible difference and contribution. Fifth, successful leaders have vision. They are consistent in that vision, meet personal expectations, as well as the expectations of those working for them.

2. Measuring Their Own Success

To follow on, each woman was then asked if she considered herself a successful homeland security leader, followed by how each measured her success and in what areas each felt she had not been successful as a leader. When asked if they consider themselves successful homeland security leaders, a majority of subjects felt that they were successful. A small number of subjects struggled with the question, but ultimately felt that they were successful. For example, one individual felt that she was successful, but questioned whether the people directly impacted by her leadership would say the same thing. One individual stated that she was not successful, and went on to explain further with the question, “what areas do you feel you have not been successful as a leader?”

The individuals interviewed had diverse criteria for measuring their individual success as leaders. While some subjects indicated that no formal or quantifiable metrics existed for measuring individual success as a leader, others had clear indicators of success. Measuring personal success for some leaders includes specific skills they have acquired and demonstrate regularly. For example, if they possess good communication and interpersonal skills, they consider that a measurement of success. For others, success

is measured by their implementation of important, far-reaching, programs. Yet others measure their own success by how they are viewed by other people and from feedback provided by others. Do they hold the respect and trust of others? Only if they do, do they consider themselves successful. Leadership is about serving constituencies, internal or external, and one leader astutely stated that to be considered successful, a leader must achieve success with three constituencies—the personnel they lead, the community they serve, and the elected leadership.

Several leaders measure their success by specific accomplishments and efforts. Success is achieved if the leaders have done their best, especially in difficult situations, to achieve a mission. Within specific organizations, tangible measurements are important. For example, one fire chief interviewed indicated that if the number of fires, fire deaths, and fire related injuries in her jurisdiction are reduced, she considers that a measurement of her success. One leader pointed out that success is not about her personally; instead, it is about the effectiveness of her organization and specific outcomes.

A critical measurement of success for several of the subjects interviewed is the health of their organization, and the success of individuals they lead and mentor. One leader indicated that because the organization she leads has an effective promotional process, recruitment process, and has diversity within staffing, she considers herself a successful leader. Another stated that if the individuals she mentors thrive and grow in the profession, she considers herself a success. That obligation to develop the next generation of leaders was cited in several interviews as key measurements of leaders' success.

One leader stressed that success is about the whole person, not just what they have accomplished. For example, does the leader feel good about the efforts she has led and accomplished? Another measurement of success is the ability to collaborate, coordinate, establish and maintain partnerships, gain cooperation and consensus among team members, even when teamwork is a struggle. One leader measures her success using tangible feedback, including non-verbal cues and the overall atmosphere of her office. Another talked about the ability to make split-second decisions when urgent or

necessary, yet being able to value the opinions of others, and acquiring buy-in in the decision-making process when possible. This ability to be what she deems a situational leader, not simply autocratic or democratic, is critical to success. A successful leader recognizes when autocracy is necessary, practices democracy when possible, but is always decisive.

One leader, whose jurisdiction recently experienced a tragic event, felt like her success as a leader is also directly influenced by how her organization responds to a major event, and how well various organizations come together to deal with that event. Being an emergency manager, how the responding organizations and groups interact in tragedies, is a measurement of how the system works and whether or not she has been successful in her efforts.

3. Unsuccessful Experiences

When asked in what areas they felt they have not been successful as leaders, subjects provided wide-ranging responses. Leadership style is different from male counterparts. Some female leaders indicated it is important for them to be empathetic and listen to personnel. However, that view is a dual-edged sword. Some people, especially in a law enforcement atmosphere, expect a more directive leadership style. They may not want a leader to care; instead, they prefer a leader to demand, not listen and encourage discussion or buy-in. While diversity is good, and diverse leadership styles are good, the different styles may not always meet everyone's expectations. One woman interviewed stated that sometimes she felt like she may be more effective if she was less concerned with talking and simply became "a raging bitch."

Others indicated that at times they would lose patience with people, and had trouble remembering that not everyone shares the same motivation and values as they do. It was difficult for some individuals to measure up and meet the expectations of these leaders, and one leader was called out for having favorites, an A team and a B team. To counter that, this leader encouraged individuals to get on board and stated her willingness to bring more people into the folds of the A team, as long as they would step up.

Several leaders interviewed cited failures to communicate properly as areas in which success was not achieved. These leaders talked about the importance of relationships, and that when communications failed, they reflected that if they had spent more time cultivating relationships or talking to people, the failures would not have occurred. One interesting observation came from a woman who is herself a “baby boomer.” She indicated that she feels like she could do a better job communicating with younger generations of employees, specifically millennial. This viewpoint was a unique observation in that communications between generations may be an area in which leaders encounter difficulty. One subject stated that she felt unsuccessful because she had failed to break through the glass ceiling to achieve the highest possible level of leadership in her organization. This subject feels that a glass ceiling still exists as it relates to women, especially in a public safety or law enforcement environment, and that homeland security is largely dominated by men.

Another woman interviewed cited areas when she had not recognized talent, not visualized potential, and not shaped it correctly as areas in which she was not successful as a leader. Similarly, two leaders indicated that due to the sheer volume of work and size of organizations, they were unable to spend more time in the field, visiting fire houses, visiting with personnel, and just having a more personal leadership touch. This view was important to them, and not being able to do more of that were failures for them. Having non-supportive leaders herself was cited as area of non-success for one interview subject. This lack of support meant that the leader did not have the ability or authority within her organization to lead effectively and meet her mission.

Being able to cross jurisdictional boundaries, and collaborate regularly with local, state and federal partners, no matter where a leader sits, is important and was cited as an area in which one leader felt she had not been successful. This leader indicated that because she is so busy with her specific area of responsibility, she has been unable to keep up with what is going on nationally and federally. Knowing what is influencing

homeland security going forward, and being able to recognize what is on the horizon is important, but difficult to do. This leader indicated that recognizing “what we don’t know” is critical.

Regardless of individual areas in which they have not been successful, most leaders recognize that failures and mistakes are necessary in leadership, and contribute to their path to becoming successful leaders. Leaders must learn from these mistakes and failures, constantly evaluate them, and move forward. One leader stated it wisely, when she said she “could name 10,000 areas where she has not been successful, but I recognize them, look back on them, learn from them, and humbly move on.”

4. Measuring Others’ Success

Next, leaders were asked to describe how they measure the success of other leaders, and then whether or not leadership success is based on the opinions of others. This set of questions was established to try to define success further, and determine if leaders have different measurements for their own successes than they do others. Several leaders indicated that they measure other leaders no differently than they do themselves. Others stated that they consider the leaders they respect, and those that have served as mentors, as successful. Leaders who are flexible and have the ability to work in different groups, with different people, who meet with peers on a regular basis, and who collaborate outside their immediate circles, are measured as successful among several of the leaders interviewed. Successful leaders must also have certain non-negotiable principles that they demonstrate and from which they never waiver. These principles are evident among leaders in the way they communicate with others. Several interview subjects indicated that decisiveness is also critical for a successful leader.

Holding respect of internal and external stakeholders, being honest and forthright, and having the level of authority necessary to do their job were cited as measures of success for other leaders. One leader stated that while some leaders may lack certain

traits that she likes to see in leaders, they still may be successful, and may or may not hold the respect of others. Successful leaders are able to influence others, and have the ability to make situations happen.

One leader honestly stated that while one of the measures of her own success is her ability to collaborate, that may not necessarily be the measure she uses for other leaders. For example, she cited a leader she works with as being extremely effective and successful, but it not considered a great collaborator. Thus, she states that the true measure of success is getting the job done. If at the end of the day a leader does not get the job done, then “who cares” if he or she is a wonderful collaborator? To be successful, a leader must get the job done, and get it done well. One leader indicated that she does not judge other leaders. She explained that leadership is not black and white, and that many shades of grey do exist, and that she does not attempt to categorize leaders. Another leader similarly explained that while young and inexperienced leaders may have a tendency to compare themselves to other leaders, as they mature, that tendency decreases. It is important, according to her, to learn from others, and take small pieces of their leadership traits and add them to your own capabilities, but not to try to emulate other leaders. While some leaders stated that they measure others the same as themselves, one leader gave a different perspective. Early in her career, she had the tendency to use a “measuring stick” for herself, and would sometimes unknowingly use it to beat (figuratively) others because she wanted them to strive like she did. She wanted to have the same standards as her male counterparts, and worked hard to achieve those standards, so she expected others to do the same. She did not realize this tendency until it was pointed out to her, and it caused her to reevaluate how she placed expectations on others. Successful leaders must be able to recognize that not everyone is the same as they are. Another interview subject explained that successful leaders pay attention to others and what they are thinking, and do not get stuck in their “leadership bubble.”

Again, the ability to motivate personnel to achieve a common mission was cited as a measure of success. One subject interviewed explained that she measures leaders’ success by the ability to have the people they are leading want to work with them, not just

for them, and not because they are required to work for them. That ability to motivate others to act out of desire, and not just obligation, is a measure of success. Successful leaders, according to one subject, are also concerned with their staff's morale, and can recognize when it is an issue that needs to be addressed. One leader pointed out that a specific leader she worked with was particularly successful because he gathered perspectives from many stakeholders, including those of the community he served. This ability to see the world outside of the immediate realm of responsibility, to have vision, is a measure of successful leaders.

5. Opinion of Others

When asked if success is based on the opinions of others, the leaders interviewed overwhelmingly indicated that it is. Of the fourteen women interviewed, only one subject indicated that success is not based on the opinion of others. The other subjects believe that the opinion of others is a factor in the overall success of that leader. Each interview subject had varying beliefs about the range of how strong a factor others' opinions were. For example, one subject indicated that leadership can sometimes become a popularity contest, and the success of the individual leader can be impacted by how powerful allies or mentors are. Another subject pointed out that the morale of the work force is important, and that surveys on work force morale matter and are directly attributed to the leader of that work force. Performance appraisals are another area in which the opinions of others impact the success of a leader. Individuals are promoted and rewarded based on success. Sometimes, a leaders' reputation may not be that this individual is well-liked, but still respected. If leaders are viewed as being able to "get things done" or is valuable to the community they serve, they are perceived as successful. The one subject that stated that success is not based on the opinions of others believes that success is an internal measure for individual leaders, and is based on personal perspectives.

6. Leadership in Other Professions

The second series of questions, starting with the primary question, was do they have leadership experience in other professions? It was found that out of the 14 women

interviewed, 11 had experience in other professions to include possibly related fields, such as emergency management, the military, and those who maintained the same career but in a non-homeland security role. To help define success as a leader in other professions compared with homeland security, those 11 women were then asked, what those experiences were, and how they were and were not successful in those professions. Professions ranged from emergency management, public health, and military to relatively non-homeland security related fields, such as paralegal and nonprofit fields (Table 4).

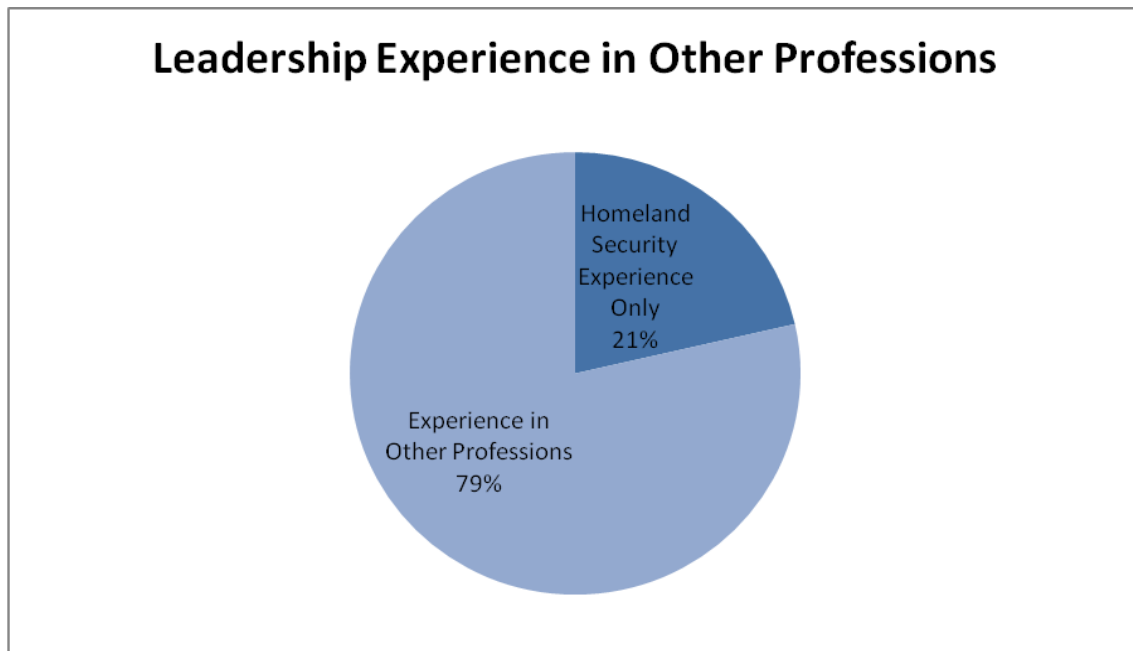


Table 4. Leadership Experience in Other Professions

Two women interviewed broke out their emergency management careers separate from their homeland security careers and felt that they were successful in those careers. One woman stated that she felt that she was more successful in emergency management due to homeland security having more of a paramilitary like background that was less embracing of women, further stating that if you did not come from a male-dominated fire or law enforcement field, success in homeland security was harder to achieve. Those women who came from a military background, as well as those who migrated into specific homeland security areas from the same career field stated similar experiences

and felt that they were generally successful in those prior careers. Only a couple of women felt they were not successful in these areas. These reasons included traditional female barriers in the workplace.

7. Success in Other Professions

To compare requirements between other professions and homeland security, a second group of four women who came from non-homeland security fields were asked how they were and were not successful in those fields. They were all consistent in the fact that they felt they were successful; however, they had differing answers on how they may not have been successful. These answers ranged from their need to leave that career field to the lack of income.

8. Is Homeland Security Leadership Different?

Both groups of women were asked how their previous leadership positions were different from those in homeland security, and if the leadership requirements were different or more difficult to achieve. Common responses were no they were not; however, depending on the previous career, some felt they were slightly different. One woman had paralegal experience for example, and she felt that even though she was still helping the public, as a paralegal, she was more limited in that ability. Those who worked in public health and nonprofit organizations recognized that leadership positions might have been different from those in homeland security because of the different culture in those fields.

General consensus was that leadership requirements were not different from one organization to another; however, how difficult leadership was to achieve in those different organizations varied greatly. Those women who came from a military background found it dependent on the career field held in the military. Similarly, those coming from varied backgrounds also had different responses on how difficult leadership roles were to achieve in previous professions. Those women coming from emergency management backgrounds, however, were consistent in their belief that it was harder to achieve leadership roles as a woman in homeland security due to the male-dominated fire

and law enforcement-dominated foundation of homeland security. Most of the women interviewed were in emergency management during the expansion of homeland security after 9/11, and saw the increased need for collaboration between agencies. Some women interviewed felt that women held an advantage over the traditional law enforcement and fire organizations due to their lack of this ability prior to 9/11.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION #2. WHAT REASONS CAN EXPLAIN THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN IN HOMELAND SECURITY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?

Due to the complexity of the second research question, a series of 36 questions were asked from six root questions. These questions were deliberate to investigate 24 possible reasons that may explain the success of women in homeland security leadership positions.

1. Factors That Contributed to Acquiring Leadership Positions

First, all the women were asked what factors contributed to them acquiring leadership positions in homeland security. As anticipated, most had unique reasons and histories on how they acquired leadership positions in homeland security. However, two common factors were consistent with the majority of the women interviewed, experience and mentors. Over half of those interviewed felt that their professional background and experience played a large role in their success as homeland security leaders. Similarly, the same amount also gave credit to having good mentors, the majority of which were male, as they grew as a professional.

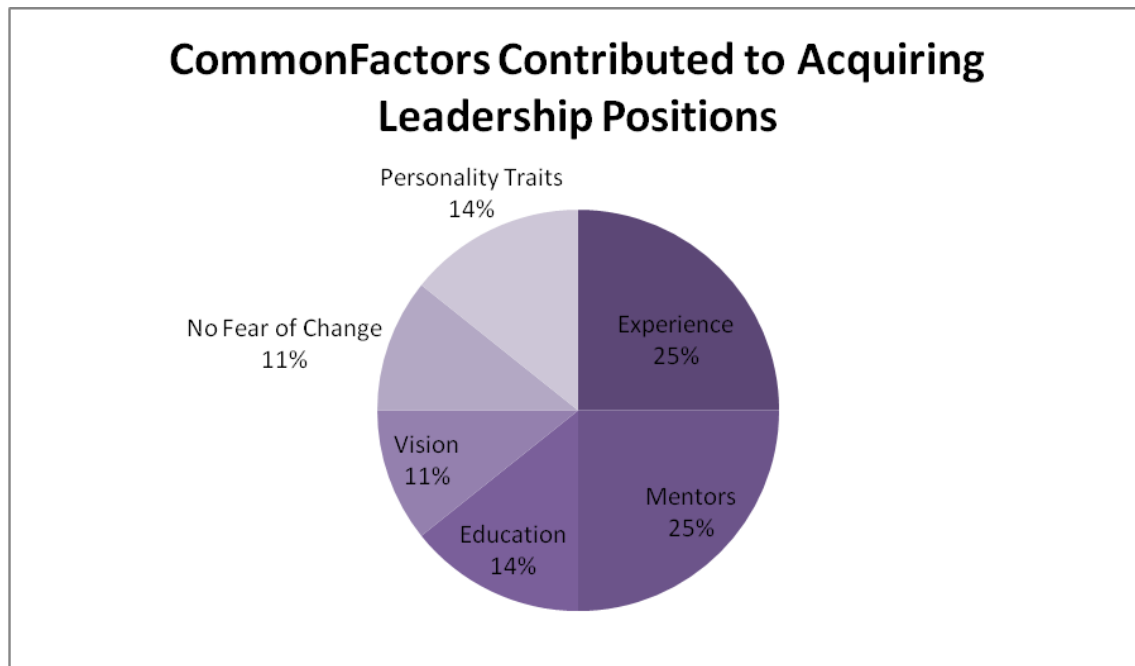


Figure 2. Common Factors Contributed to Acquiring Leadership Positions

When further asked, have other factors, besides individual leadership skills, contributed to your leadership status and success, two additional women gave credit to having mentors that helped them in structuring their leadership style and contributing factors in their success, as well as one woman who accredited experience when asked the same question. Some other responses from multiple subjects were education, personal vision, and personality traits, to include being hard working, being a team player, and being fearless of the future or change. Once again, more women identified these traits when asked the two follow on questions. Some less common examples of responses were the desire to serve, communicative and collaborative skills, innovativeness, understanding of strategy, and being able to get things done. All the women interviewed had a well-defined reason for their individual success in their unique career paths as homeland security leaders.

2. Skills that Contribute to Success

Additionally, to identify factors further that contributed to their leadership success, they were asked what specific leadership skills have helped them and what other

factors, besides individual leadership skills, have contributed to their leadership status and success in homeland security. Some further information not identified above was skills, such as the ability to build relationships, talk about change, professionalism, and family background.

Due to differences in interpretation of the series of questions by those women interviewed, on what they felt to be factors versus skills or other factors that contributed to their success, similar answers were given within the three questions. Post analysis of all three questions in that series found mentors and education to be considered the most consistent factors of success among most of the women interviewed, followed closely by experience and personality traits, also being identified by over half of those women interviewed.

3. Is Homeland Security Leadership Different?

To establish if homeland security leadership needs are different from other professions, the women were asked if they thought homeland security had different leadership competencies. They were then asked if they thought those needs have changed since the inception of homeland security and if they thought those competencies made it any easier for women to succeed in the profession. When the individuals interviewed were asked if they thought homeland security has different leadership competencies than in other professions, most indicated that they did not. Each leader elaborated further, and the majority indicated that while homeland security may be a high-pressure environment, requiring dynamic leadership, the same could be true of leadership in most professions. Leading people is leading people, as one woman pointed out.

However, several leaders interviewed did describe that previous experience in homeland security related fields, including law enforcement, is important and brings certain credibility to a leader's status in the profession. For example, one woman interviewed pointed out that in an area like homeland security, filled with law enforcement and first responders, many people question whether a leader can lead, without ever having "done." Several other interview subjects described the importance of

leaders in homeland security, and similarly, emergency management, as being able to recognize that homeland security is bigger than one specific discipline. To be successful, these leaders must be able to understand that homeland security is not one-dimensional, understand the multitude of public safety cultures represented in the entire enterprise, and bring them all to the table for an effective homeland security strategy. While this may not be considered a unique competency for homeland security leaders, it was certainly demonstrated to be a competency necessary for leaders in homeland security. One leader interviewed indicated that she believes homeland security has different leadership competencies, but did so with a qualified “probably.” Her answer was based on her opinion that homeland security comes with the pressure of saving lives, whereas many other professions do not directly impact life safety.

4. Has Leadership Changed?

The next question posed to the research subjects was “have leadership needs changed in homeland security since its inception?” Five of the subjects indicated that leadership needs have changed, while the others either did not answer the question directly, or provided responses that were neither positive nor negative. Several common themes emerged from the women who indicated that leadership needs have changed in homeland security. First, the more time passes since 9/11, the more people, including leaders, become comfortable in homeland security, which may mean less diligence from some leaders. Second, in the early days of homeland security following 9/11, leaders were facing the unknown urgency that was homeland security. They were trying to build a national strategy, trying to determine how to use the vast amounts of funding allocated to build homeland security programs, and as one woman aptly described, “just trying to figure out how to get up in the morning and what to do next.” The leaders at that time were critical to building the program. Now that the infrastructure and framework is in place, leaders must be able to sustain the programs, and keep up progress while working in a harsh economy and in an environment of reduced funding. The challenges of homeland security leaders today are different from those encountered in the early days of its inception. The workforce is also changing and evolving, and it is doing so rapidly and

constantly. According to two subjects interviewed, homeland security leaders must be able to manage a diverse workforce. For example, women are in more senior positions in homeland security and have the ability to contribute at the highest levels of the enterprise.

5. Is It Easier for Women to Succeed in Homeland Security Leadership?

When asked if they believe these different leadership competencies make it easier for women to succeed in homeland security, only three of the women interviewed answered with a direct yes. Two stated that these competencies do not make it easier for women to succeed in homeland security, and the others did not have a firm stance on this question but provided their insight and opinions about the question. Several of the women interviewed explained that while collaboration is critical in homeland security, and collaboration is often attributed to female leaders, they have also seen men who are strong collaborators.

Four of the women interviewed described the importance of collaboration in homeland security, and indicated that women tend to be more collaborative, and understand the importance of building strong relationships. However, one leader pointed out that this “soft skill” can also present challenges for women leaders. Homeland security is still a male-dominated profession, heavily laden with law enforcement. In that type of environment, leaders, who are traditionally male, are perceived as needing to be strong, dominating, and calloused. When women display soft skills like cooperation, collaboration, and empathy, they can be perceived as weak. These women must be comfortable in their own skin, and be able to endure when those perceptions occur.

Another leader described that while collaboration may be viewed more prominently among female leaders, she also sees it as a generational thing. In her experience, men of a younger generation, now in the workforce, also display strong collaborative tendencies. Also interesting is that in today’s workforce, men and women share many responsibilities inside the home, unlike in the past when women were primarily the homemakers, while men went to the office. She opines that this shared responsibility may contribute to men today being more collaborative as leaders.

The workforce is evolving, women are contributing at higher levels of leadership, and several women interviewed indicated that the numbers of women in the workforce would continue to grow. One leader believes that by selecting or appointing leaders based on the necessary homeland security competencies, diversity is encouraged and all individuals, regardless of gender or race, will have the opportunities to become leaders.

6. Appointed vs. Career Leaders

An analysis was conducted of whether the 14 women interviewed were appointed into their homeland security leadership role, or if they considered themselves career (see Figure 3). Six of the women were career leaders who rose through the ranks and went through a formal application and interview process to acquire their leadership position. Six were directly appointed through political and nonpartisan appointments, and two women have held both appointed and career leadership positions in their career.

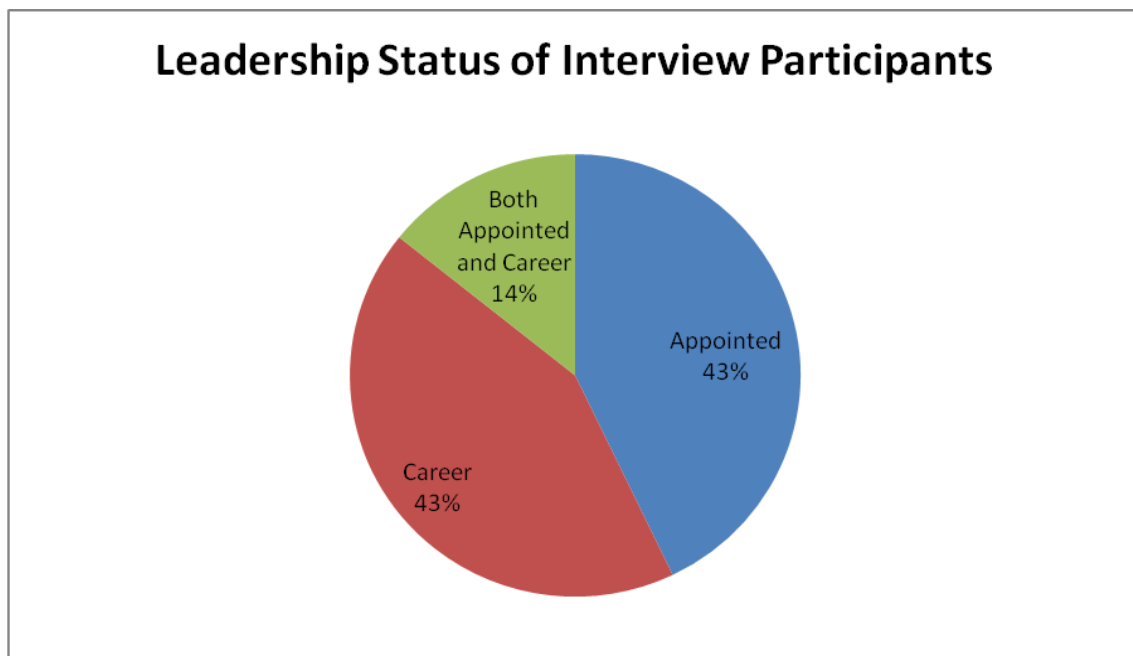


Figure 3. Leadership Status of Interview Participants

In determining if they felt appointed and career leaders had different requirements, the women were asked if they thought leadership requirements were different for appointed versus career leaders, and if they thought success was measured differently for those two types of leaders. Of the ten women who chose to address the question of if they thought leadership requirements were different, five said yes, three said no, and the rest were either unsure or noncommittal. One of the women who responded “no” was very clear on her thought stating, “a leader is a leader, no matter how you get the job, the requirements for leadership are the same.” Some misinterpretation concerning this question by those who answered yes or were noncommittal may have occurred. Responses to the second question gave some indication of confusion on behalf of those interviewed, between goal success and leadership success between the two types of leaders.

The majority of those interviewed agreed that success was measured differently for appointed leaders as opposed to those who were career. They stated in most cases that appointed leaders had political objectives and requirements that usually had higher priorities than those held by career leaders. However, with both questions, many women who answered yes agreed that no differences in the requirements or in how success is measured should exist between appointed and career homeland security leaders.

7. Traits of Successful Homeland Security Leaders

As for leadership traits, the women were asked to describe the leadership traits they attribute to successful homeland security leaders. Due to confusion between leadership competencies and traits, some women previously answered this question; however, those who did answer this question specifically replied with a range of traits, with several common themes emerging. Self-knowledge and self-awareness were described by several of those interviewed as being common and important traits of successful homeland security leaders. Specifically, leaders should know their own strengths and weaknesses, accept responsibility for success and failures, and learn from those experiences. Credibility, integrity, strong ethics, selflessness, patience, fairness, and consistency were also described as traits of successful leaders. Decisiveness is another

trait that successful homeland security leaders should possess, according to several of the women interviewed. Leaders, especially in homeland security, must be able to make split-second decisions when necessary, but also recognize when decisions should be made with group input. They are also not afraid to take risks, and are flexible and able to evolve, change, and think outside the box. One woman interviewed stated that successful homeland security leaders are confident, while another indicated that one of the most successful leaders she worked with was a “quiet leader” who led by example, to include having an exemplary personal life. Only one of the women interviewed stated that successful homeland security leaders were charismatic.

A large majority of the women interviewed attribute strong collaborative and communication skills to successful homeland security leaders. They indicated that successful leaders must be able to listen to others; including non-traditional external partners, and work with diverse groups and organizations to advance the mission. Successful homeland security leaders must have the interpersonal skills to get along with and relate to others.

8. Leadership Traits that Women Possess

To identify traits specifically that help leaders succeed in homeland security and whether or not women possess them, they were then asked which of those traits they possess, and if in their experience, women generally possess those traits. Next, they were asked if they regularly use those traits in their day-to-day leadership role to determine if the traits were necessary in homeland security leadership positions.

When asked which of the leadership traits attributed to successful homeland security leaders they possess, the majority of women interviewed believe they possess all of them. However, several of the women interviewed had a difficult time answering that question, and one specifically indicated that talking about herself in that way felt awkward. Most of the women interviewed were very humble and were somewhat uncomfortable to be in position in which they felt they might be perceived as bragging about themselves. The traits most often described as being possessed by the women

interviewed were the ability to think outside the box, being open-minded, able and willing to collaborate, patience, empathy, consistency, ethical, honest, taking risks, and being a team player.

The women interviewed could not easily identify whether or not women generally possess the traits attributed to successful homeland security leaders. Even though the question was posed with the word “generally” as a qualifier, most women interviewed thought the question could not really be answered. One woman indicated that she had not worked with enough women leaders to have a real opinion about this question, because so few senior women leaders currently work in the homeland security profession. While several explained that they possessed those traits, and some of the women they had knowledge of possessed those traits, they could not definitively say that all women possess them. Several of the women interviewed described both women and men who possessed these traits, and explained that both sexes can demonstrate these leadership traits and it is more situational and style-based, with no basis in gender.

One woman stated that while she believes women generally possess these traits and soft skills like collaboration, they tend to suppress them and adopt a more male-oriented leadership style to succeed in a male-dominated profession. Another explained that in her experiences with other women in the profession, they tend to be more hesitant, lack confidence, and second-guess their own abilities, which tends to prevent them from achieving the highest levels of leadership. One interesting phenomenon shared by one leader was what she called the “Queen Bee” syndrome. She explained that occasionally when a woman rises to the highest level of leadership, she takes on a persona of a queen bee and becomes isolated. She then takes credit for all successes as her own and becomes reluctant to help others, especially women, partly out of her own fear and insecurity, but also out of the instinct to survive and thrive in a male-dominated environment. While the woman interviewed indicated that this behavior has decreased over time, female leaders should still be conscious of this conduct. Another woman interviewed shared that individuals either possess these traits or they do not. Leaders have different points of maturity, and some are better than others at demonstrating these traits. She also shared

that perceptions can sometimes impact leaders. For example, often times, if women are perceived as nice, they are not perceived as credible. If men are perceived as credible, they are not perceived as nice. Interestingly, perceptions of gender issues can contribute to the reputation of the leader as much as their individual leadership attributes.

All the women interviewed indicated that they regularly use these leadership traits in their day-to-day leadership roles. Some women were not directly asked this question, because they talked about using these skills regularly throughout the interview when answering different questions. Two of the women interviewed went further to explain that they try to use these traits regularly, and while they still have not mastered all of the traits, they work on them continually, and strive to lead by example.

9. Do Men and Women Possess Different Leadership Traits?

In an attempt to determine if women have an advantage in this area over men, and the importance of those differences in traits, they were asked three specific questions. First, the general question, do women and men possess different leadership traits? Followed by, which of these traits do you believe women demonstrate more than men in leadership roles, and third, how important are these traits for successful leadership? Most of the women interviewed explained that while men and women may possess some different traits, they were actually personality traits, not leadership traits. The leadership differences between men and women may really be more related to style, instead of specific leadership traits. One woman interviewed specifically talked about gender not being an issue, and that she has never paid attention to any different leadership traits between the sexes. Another interviewee talked about leadership changing, and that she witnessed men change as they matured, especially when they married and/or became fathers.

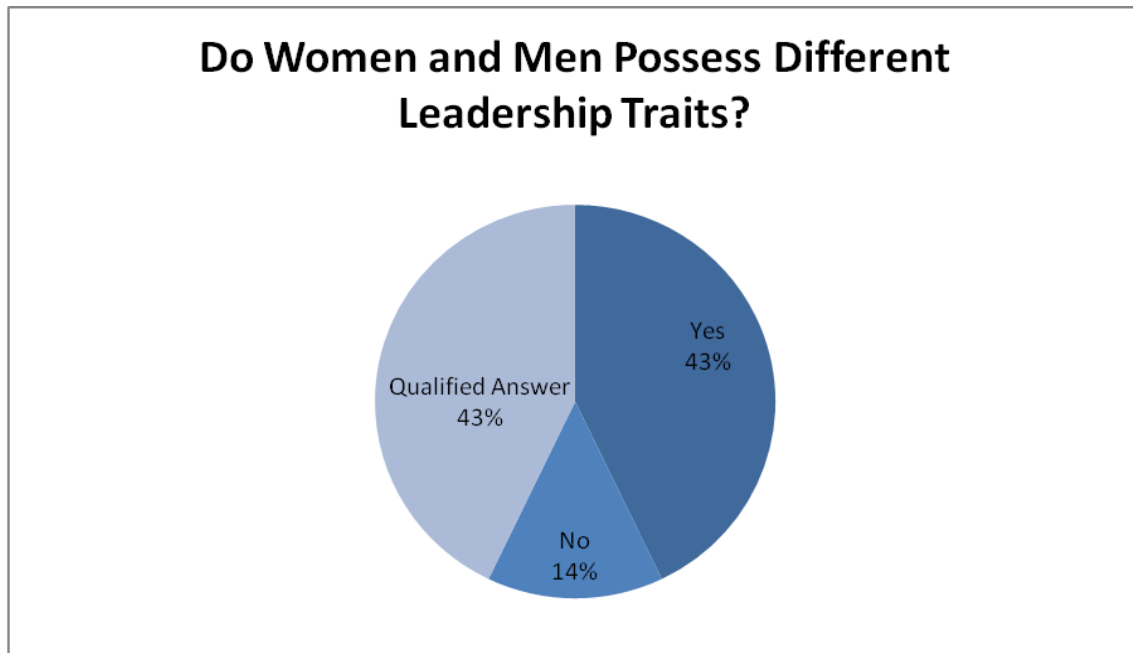


Figure 4. Do Men and Women Possess Different Leadership Traits?

The women who did describe different leadership traits between the genders, talked about women being more sensitive, compassionate, inclusive, collaborative, team oriented, and process oriented than men. One leader described men as less willing to take public risks than women, while another described women as not being afraid of asking questions, even at the risk of embarrassing themselves in public meetings. Several leaders interviewed also believe that women demonstrate better multitasking abilities than men, are more approachable than men, are more likely to “leave their egos at the door” than men, and generally demonstrate more caring than men. Most of the women interviewed stressed the importance of these traits for successful leadership while responding to previous related questions. For the three who did not, they were specifically asked to respond to that question. All three indicated that the traits were important, with one stressing that the traits were “really important.” One of the leaders indicated that these traits, like relationship building, collaboration, and caring might be more important to her because she is a female and values those specific traits. However, she further explained that the best leader she ever worked for, a man, told her once that she should always leave her emotions at home and not bring them to work. This advice stuck with her, and

she wonders if the emotional side of women may be valued more by women, while being advised against by men. Another leader explained that these traits are important as the workforce changes, and that leaders must be adaptable and flexible. She feels that because employees in today's workforce want to be valued, and want leaders who care, and leaders who do not understand that concept cannot be successful. One example in which the important trait of multitasking may be detrimental to leaders came from a leader, formerly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and now in the private sector. She explained that in today's workforce, people multi-task so much that they have trouble focusing on any one particular task at hand. For example, she was recently on a conference call in a meeting room, and someone in her office, right down the hall, was participating on the conference call on the phone, instead of joining the group in the meeting room. She explained that she could literally hear the person on the call down the hall simultaneously while the call was occurring. When asked why she was calling in instead of joining the meeting, the person explained that she had many tasks to complete, which was an example of how multitasking, while important for leaders, can also be detrimental if not managed. The woman who shared this story works hard to focus on the task at hand and multi-tasks when she knows she can. Women may be particularly good at multitasking, but sometimes at the risk of missing the important tasks.

10. Challenges for Homeland Security Leaders

In an attempt to determine if challenges for women are unique to homeland security, each was asked what obstacles women face in homeland security. Three main points were constant between most of those interviewed: women were still a minority in the homeland security profession, it is still male dominated, and the lack of male-dominated paramilitary experience of women from the fire fighter, law enforcement, and military professions. Most women either directly stated or implied that women were still a minority in the homeland security profession, and even more so in leadership positions. One woman gave a typical example of how she could be in a meeting with 30–40 people and she would be the only woman. In addition, another woman pointed out that it was

very common for all the senior leadership in an office to be male, but extraordinarily unique for any office to have more than one woman on the leadership staff and further emphasized how distinctive the female director and deputy director for the Drug Enforcement Administration was by stating, “it was huge.”

The other two major findings with this particular question was the lack of experience in paramilitary career fields, such as law enforcement, fire and emergency medical fields, and even military backgrounds. As pointed out in previous questions, it was determined that homeland security was formed around these career fields more so than emergency management. Due to the small number of women in these career fields, found both from the interviews and from the demographic analysis, most women face this obstacle in homeland security. Some women continued to refer to homeland security as still being a “man’s world” and lends itself to the “good ole boy network.”

When initially asked this question, two women first answered they had no obstacles, but later identified problems and obstacles they faced that were similar to the other women who openly identified issues, making it unanimous among the interviewed panel that women do have obstacles in homeland security. Other than the three main points stated above, some minor points were not enough opportunities for women: the pressure to do more, the lack of mentors, and women to men dialogue. One woman felt that women were obstacle to themselves and each other by sharing that in her experience, women tend to grade each other harder. It was apparent that some overlap of answers to the next question might have occurred regarding challenges experienced as a homeland security leader. Some women had similar answers to those that they had with obstacles; however, a very distinct pattern did arise with this question. All the women questioned fell into one of three answer categories related to either: poor definitions and diminishing funds in homeland security, relationships and acquisition of intelligence from the intelligence community, and people related interactions. Each woman’s issues stayed within one of these categories and did not address issues in the other two.

A large number of women (five) identified some form of personnel or people related challenge. Some were personal, such as unwanted sexual advances and

acceptance as a woman, to promotion challenges within their agency. One woman pointed out that a significant difference existed between authority and influence, and that one can exist without the other, which implied that the challenge is to have both to be effective in leadership.

The second largest group identified the lack of a consistent definition of what homeland security is since its relatively new inception after 9/11, and its continuing decrease in funding. Several women identified the fact that after 9/11, large amounts of federal funds were available for the creation of homeland security agencies to build upon with little guidance of what they should look like. As homeland security became more defined, funding decreased, which led to the increased need for interagency collaboration and coordination that also led to other challenges, such as the sharing of intelligence. Some leaders directly cited intelligence sharing and acquisition as the third category in this question. Some women felt like they, as homeland security and emergency managers, were treated as “second class citizens,” and felt as though the intelligence communities did not trust them.

When those women who held careers in other fields asked if they had experienced those same challenges in other professions, some had and some had not with no correlation between their professions, prior careers, or the category into which they fell above. Of those who said they did experience the same challenges, most felt that they were similar; one felt that the challenges were worse, referring to the acquisition of intelligence, and one felt that that mission definition was still an issue in her previous career but better than homeland security.

Half the women felt that some challenges were unique to women, and identified biases toward women or non-traditional demographic persons to homeland security, as well sexual harassment and fear of failures. The other half felt that they might not be necessarily unique to women, but in some cases, be unique to homeland security’s culture. One woman stated that they were only a problem to her as a woman if she allowed it to be, and once she disregarded such matters and focused on being promoted, they no longer were an issue as a woman.

11. Obstacles and Barriers for Women Homeland Security Leaders

A concern arose when analyzing the questions on how the women interviewed would define the difference between obstacles, challenges, and barriers. A belief surfaced that similar answers might have occurred throughout the three different questions and findings might overlap. However, unlike the answers to what obstacles women face where they became easy to categorize and what challenges have they experienced, which fell into three consistent groups, the question of what barriers they have encountered had no similarities from one woman to another. Each woman interview had her own barriers that she has or ever had to overcome in becoming a homeland security leader. Of those with previous careers in other professions, some women encountered similar barriers, while others did not with no correlation or measurable connection.

One similar connection between most of the women's barriers was time. Several women presented examples of how much worse it was in the 1970s and 1980s compared to today, and listed examples of sexist behavior back then that they freely admitted would not be allowed to exist today. One woman, who had graduated college with a law enforcement degree, was told by a police department that, "sorry we are not hiring women today." New equal opportunity laws and the slow increase of women in their perspective careers corrected most of the examples presented from their early careers. Some of the more recent barriers were described as non-gender based, such as budget, cliques, and political issues.

Identifying ways that successful women have addressed barriers was as diverse as their answers to what they were. Although some, in the early years, followed the formal road of filing complaints and legal means, the majority overcame these barriers with sound leadership practices regardless of gender. In addition to good leadership traits, such as strategic planning, professional credibility, and patience, some also use personality traits, such as perseverance, tenacity, relentlessness, positive attitude, and hard work to push their way forward. Only in a few cases were the individuals required to leave their positions or rely on the corrective action of management.

Other factors that may impact women's opportunities for leadership positions within homeland security were listed by those interviewed as work life balance, women being more emotional than men, lack of confidence, and not enough good female mentors. An additional point brought out that may impact women's opportunities for leadership positions with homeland security, which also impacted men, was the ever decreasing government funding. When employees reach retirement age, decreased funding usually may not allow the individual to be replaced, which decreases the opportunities for women and men to be promoted into leadership roles. Similarly, the lack of funding also decreases family friendly work options, such as teleworking and compressed work schedules that are largely used by women and single parent families.

12. Work-Life Balance

To determine further if other factors that impact women's leadership success in homeland security compared to other professions, the women were asked if any other factors, such as work-life balance or child care, impacted their path to leadership, and if they have experienced them in other professions. Work-life balance issues seemed to impact half of those women interviewed and the other half stated it did not, with no consistent correlation to if they were married or not or had children or not. Some women chose not to get married and have children to pursue a career, or chose to postpone it to later in their career. One woman stated that she felt being pregnant would have ended her career. While others who were married revealed that they had not encountered any impacts to their career due to good family support, as other women felt that having families did have a significant impact on their path to leadership.

Half of those women who came from other career fields prior to homeland security felt that work-life balance issues were not an issue, or were less of an issue in other career fields largely because of the 24/7 on call requirements of first responders in homeland security fields. Needing to have plans for someone to care for their children in the middle of the night was more difficult than for mothers who had normal working hours. Those who felt that no difference existed from one job to another stated that it did not really matter what the job was, planning for the care of family made careers more

difficult across the board. Both groups of women indicated that this issue, regardless of the career field, was more difficult for single parents. Most, all but one, of the women felt that these factors have improved, lessened, or at least changed over time. Although most admitted that issues still remain, such as funds that restrict some out of the box thinking, some women also pointed out that it is still largely a function of the job or position they have. Larger issues, such as public acceptance of women in uniform, were felt by some women to have made “great” and “tremendous” improvement over the past few decades. The one woman, who felt that these factors did not improve over time, stated that they just change and gave the example of having to go from compensating for the care of her children to the care of her grandchildren.

13. How Can Women Leaders Help Other Leaders?

To identify programs or factors that help women succeed as leaders in homeland security, and to establish guidance that existing leaders can provide to future leaders, the women interviewed were next asked a series of nine questions. The first question “How can female leaders help other female leaders in homeland security?” led to further exploratory questions regarding mentoring and mentoring programs.

When asked how female leaders can help other female leaders, especially those up and coming, in homeland security, the individuals interviewed identified four major areas, with three other interesting suggestions and observations. The four major areas identified were mentoring, serving as strong, successful role models, giving support and encouragement to others, and providing opportunities for others. Ten of the 14 individuals interviewed indicated that mentoring is the most important thing female leaders can do for other current and future leaders, male or female, which includes both formal mentoring programs within organizations, as well as informal mentoring to individuals. Four of the women interviewed stressed the importance of women leaders serving as good role models for others. Simply by being strong and successful leaders, women are role models for other women, and demonstrate how women can succeed in homeland security. By nature, they are also serving as positive role models for men. Women being supportive and encouraging of one other, and not being competitive with

each other, were shared by several leaders as helpful for other leaders. Four of the women interviewed talked about the importance of women being genuinely supportive of each other, sharing in each other's successes, and offering encouragement when needed. As one woman stated, "women should not be afraid to ask for, or offer, help when needed; they have to remember they are not in it alone." Lastly, women who achieve high levels of success can provide opportunities to others, including women, for growth and development. One woman interviewed talked about the responsibility of leaders to prepare the next generation of leaders. She stated that nothing is more rewarding to her than bringing the next generation of leaders along. Another woman talked about grooming people in her organization, taking them to meetings with her and exposing them to new opportunities to help them develop their leadership abilities. It is important to mention that she does this for men and women in her organization, and does not differentiate.

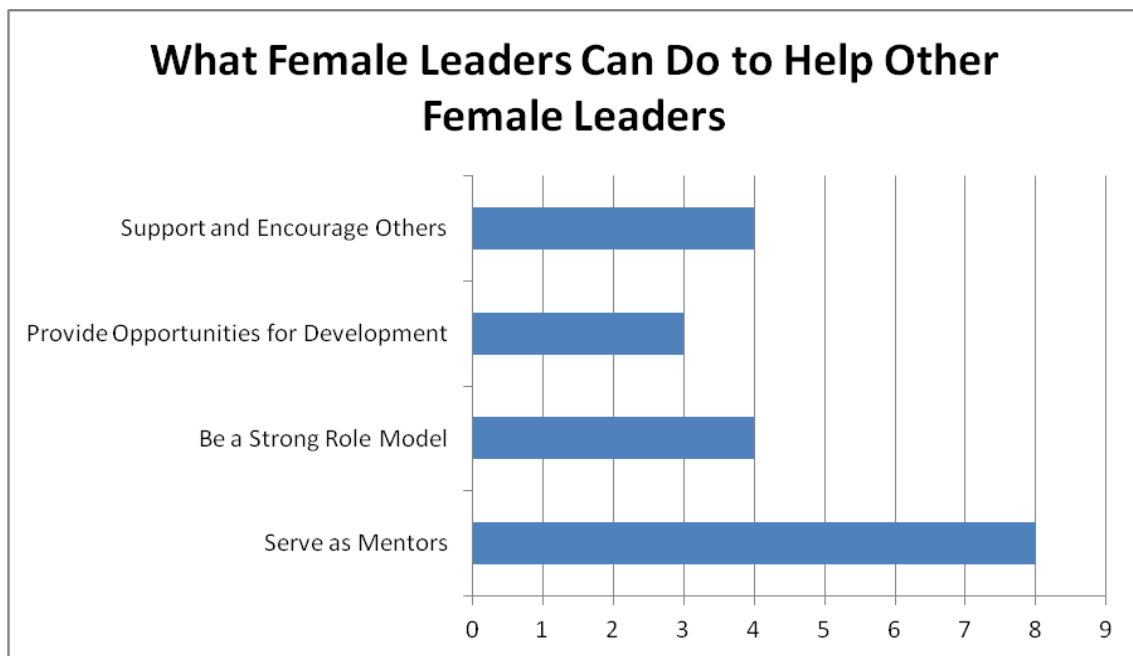


Figure 5. Ways Female Leaders Can Help Other Female Leaders

When asked this question, one woman interviewed had different advice than the others. She shared that gender should not become an issue. She feels that gender is a showstopper, and the first time someone makes it an issue, it will hurt that person's career, and therefore, it should not be made an issue.

14. Mentoring

All 14 women interviewed stated that they do provide mentoring and other assistance to existing and up and coming leaders and all but one indicated that mentoring is extended to men and women. One of the leaders interviewed stated that she only mentors women, and in her opinion, women should mentor women, and men should mentor men. Another of the leaders interviewed indicated that she offers to mentor men and women, but only women take advantage of the mentoring.

When asked if leaders seek mentoring, or other similar assistance, nine of the women interviewed stated that they do, with most also indicating that they also seek out individuals to whom to provide mentorship. One leader did not specifically recognize herself as being approached to provide mentoring, but that she probably does without knowing it. For example, individuals approach her for advice and questions regularly, she just does not specifically describe it as mentoring. Others explained that sometimes people seek assistance, but one leader pointed out that because of her position, some people are not comfortable approaching her for mentoring. She stated that it is very important for leaders to make outreach opportunities available for people, and make themselves more approachable for these purposes. In fact, she tries to be more intentional with mentoring opportunities, and works to establish "non-threatening environments" of which staff can take advantage of her mentoring. For example, she will invite staff members to travel with her or attend meetings with her to create the opportunity for small talk and to get to know them, which allows them to become comfortable and understand that she is approachable. Another leader indicated that she does not use the term "mentoring." Instead, she provides advice and counsel to others, because she believes that by using the term mentor, it makes it too structured, rather than simply making

mentoring part of the organizational culture. In her opinion, mentoring is within each leader, and that mentoring is actually no different from very good leadership. Simply being a good leader means that person is mentoring others.

The leaders interviewed provide mentoring in a variety of ways. Most do so informally, with only two doing so through formal mentoring or leadership programs through their agency or jurisdiction. The informal mentoring includes developing staff and “grooming” others within their organization. Two of the leaders specifically talked about the importance of mentoring and developing staff for the purposes of succession planning, and both actively work towards that goal. Another leader makes it a point to send encouraging and congratulatory messages and emails acknowledging promotions, awards, and other events to individuals within her organization as a way of providing support and mentoring. Helping others develop strengths, overcome weaknesses, and correct bad traits is one way another leader mentors. For example, if she encounters women who use foul language, speak too loudly, or dress inappropriately, she addresses that behavior and works with them to modify it. In her words, “bad traits can overshadow good traits;” therefore, it is important to address both.

All but one of the women interviewed have had mentors in their career, with the other stating that while she did not have formal mentors, she did develop relationships with role models who were influential to her career. Most of the women interviewed had both male and female mentors, with four reporting to have only male mentors. Of those who only had male mentors, several stated that it was most likely due to the small numbers of women, if any, available in leadership roles to mentor.

15. Formal Mentoring Programs

The next set of questions regarded existing formal mentoring or leadership development programs. Interview subjects were asked if they were aware of any formal mentoring or leadership development programs specifically for homeland security professionals, and whether or not those programs were available for men and women. All but two individuals interviewed described various programs, including formal mentoring

programs within their agency or jurisdiction, or education and leadership programs through colleges, universities, or professional organizations. Several of the women interviewed specifically mentioned the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Master's degree program and Executive Leaders Program. One individual also talked about leadership programs available through Harvard University. All the programs described, including agency or jurisdictional mentoring programs, are available for both men and women.

16. Advice for Future Homeland Security Leaders

The next question in this section, and the next to last in the formal interview, was "what advice would you give to female homeland security leaders?" Each woman interviewed gave individual advice, some personal, all insightful. Several themes emerged from the responses to this question, but the advice varied. This variation could be due to the diversity of the interview panel, including career fields, length of service, and personal experiences. The common advice shared by most of the panel members included the need for women to have confidence, work hard, have integrity, obtain the necessary education and work experience, learn from mistakes, be responsible and accountable, and build strong interpersonal relationships and networks.

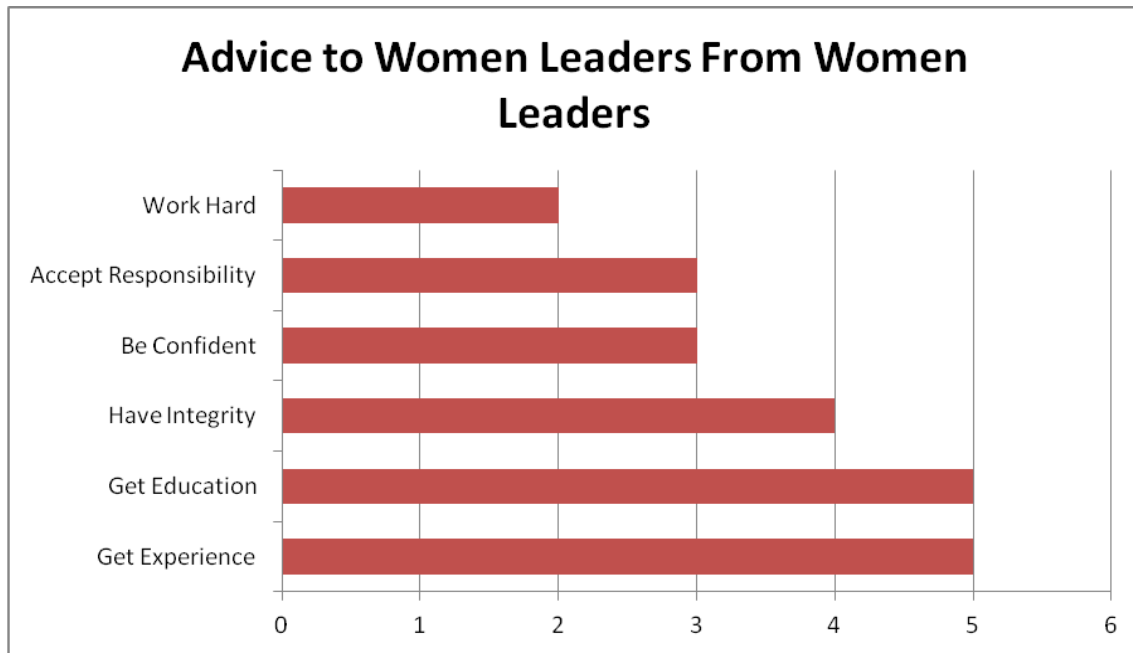


Figure 6. Advice to Women Leaders from Women Leaders

One interview subject shared that women should leave unhealthy emotions at the door, ignore the gender issue and do not make it an issue. Similarly, another stated that women should “keep their elbows sharp, stand up for themselves, and don’t take no.”

17. What Success Leaders Contribute to Homeland Security?

The last formal question posed to the individual female homeland security leaders was, “what do successful leaders contribute to homeland security?” The majority responded to the question with valuable characteristics or strategies. Many interviewees generally listed competencies, such as intelligence, efficiency, prior knowledge, experience, knowledge of key positions in leadership, innovation, foresight, resilience, and decisiveness. Other individuals cited specific influence leaders had and contributions to the homeland security profession they could make. For example, successful leaders compose regular scientific reviews of national security to build capacity and resilience for support. Efficiency was emphasized by one who stated, “Leaders strive to create a better agency. The best leaders put their foot down and say enough.” A few strongly emphasized the need for successful leaders to increase collaboration among departments

and other leaders. Relationships must continue to be built between public and private sectors. In six occurrences, individuals answered not so much to the qualities of a successful leader in homeland security, but more to the qualities of a successful homeland security enterprise. A general consensus existed among this school of thought on the word “safe.” For instance, “Leaders build a safer, more resilient nation and keep our nation safer than we would be otherwise.” Interviewees who responded in this fashion were very direct and brief.

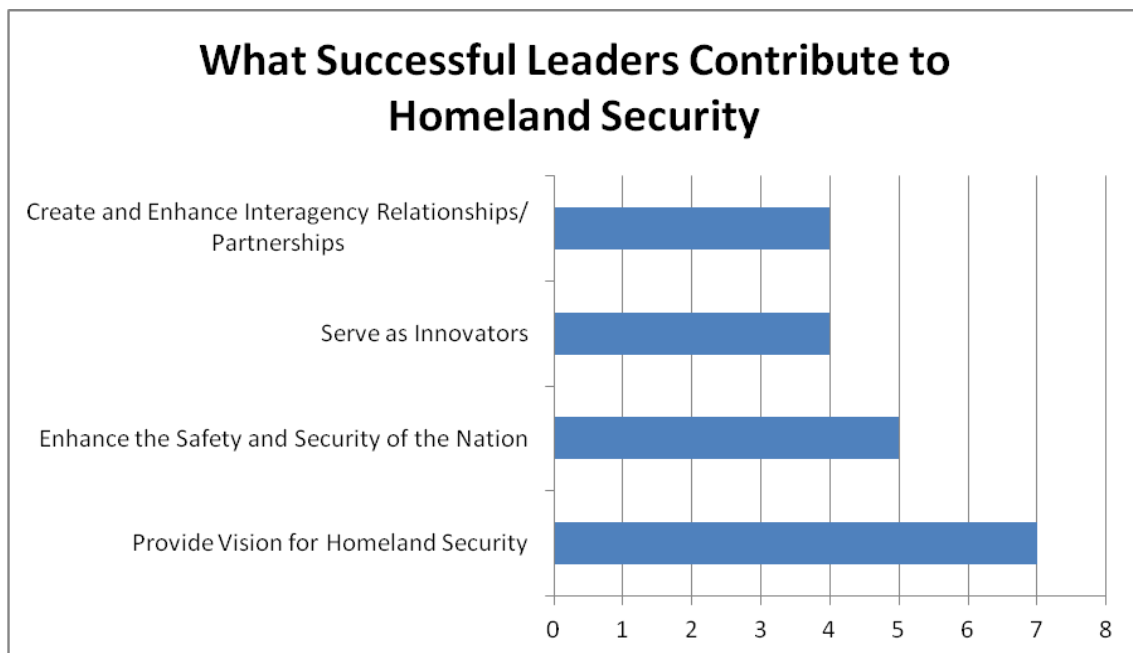


Figure 7. What Successful Leaders Contribute to Homeland Security

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VI. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What the Numbers Say

Success is difficult to define, and as one interview subject indicated, the definition of success “lies in the eyes of the beholder.” When researching the first research question, the answer was derived by analyzing the quantitative demographic data and a grounded theory analysis of the qualitative data acquired from interviews with 14 successful women leaders in the field of homeland security. The demographic analysis indicated that women hold less than 20% of the jobs in homeland security based on the 2011 U.S. Department of Labor findings. This information may not be an indicator of women’s success in the career field, but it does clearly define them as the minority.

2. What the Leaders Say

Through the qualitative analysis utilizing grounded theory, 14 women who have successfully ascended through the ranks into homeland security leadership positions, were asked a series of 13 questions through an interview process to help define success as a leader, and to define success and compare requirements between other professions to homeland security.

Five general themes on how these women define success as a leader were found from the responses: Success depends on their influence, if they complete the mission, if they make a tangible difference or contribution, whether they have vision, if they lead a healthy and effective organization, and how others perceive them. Of the 14 women interviewed, 13 felt that they considered themselves a successful homeland security leader, and they each had their own ways on how their success was measured. Some identified no formal metrics for measuring their success; however, all the women listed a number of different skills they possessed that indicated they were a good leader, such as good communications, how they are viewed by others, whether they hold respect and trust, specific accomplishments and efforts, and the health of their organization. Some

interpersonal skills were also listed, such as the ability to make split-second decisions, and to coordinate with other organizations. One leader also listed tangible measurements, such as the reduction of the loss of life and property.

Failures to communicate properly, not recognizing talent, and not being able to cross jurisdictional boundaries for proper collaboration, were listed as some of the areas in which they felt they were not successful. It was also identified that some women still feel that a “glass ceiling” still exists for women in homeland security, and they felt their inability to break through was a failure. However, most of the women interviewed felt that failure and mistakes are necessary in leadership, and contributed to their success in homeland security.

Several leaders admitted to measuring other leaders differently than they do themselves, and consider those leaders who they respect and who served as their mentors as successful. In judging other leaders, some indicated that being flexible, honest, decisive, and having foresight as positive traits, as well as holding the respect of internal and external stakeholders. While watching other leaders, some felt it was important to learn from them and take their positive leadership traits and add them to their own. All but one leader interviewed indicated that success was based on the opinion of others, and in some cases, to the point of it becoming a popularity contest.

Of the women interviewed, 10 had leadership experience in other professions to include emergency management, the military, and other paramilitary professions, such as law enforcement, emergency medical or fire protection. All the women stating that they were successful listed different reasons for their success based on their previous career. Consensus was that leadership requirements were not different from one organization to another; however, how difficult leadership roles were to achieve varied greatly. Those women coming from emergency management backgrounds were consistent with their belief that it was harder for women to achieve leadership positions in homeland security because of the male-dominated fire and law enforcement foundation of homeland security.

Based on the qualitative analysis of these interviews with 14 successful female leaders, women are succeeding in homeland security leadership positions. The low percentage of women in the homeland security profession, however, suggests that woman may not be succeeding in achieving careers in homeland security that would lead them to acquire leadership positions within the profession.

3. There are Many Reasons for Success

While each woman interviewed had different experiences and credited different factors as contributing to success, several common themes emerged from the analysis of the data presented. The reasons that can explain the success of women homeland security leaders are diverse and unique to the individuals interviewed. To describe the most common reasons, findings are grouped in seven overarching areas, discussed below.

a. Having Strong and Influential Mentors

Similar to experience, over half of the women interviewed credited having good mentors, the majority of whom were male, as contributors to their success. These mentors helped these women structure their leadership styles. All but one leader interviewed cited mentors as being influential in their careers. The large majority of leaders interviewed believe that mentoring is the most important thing women can do for current and future leaders, male or female.

b. Having the Right Experience

Over half the women interviewed indicated that their professional background and experience played a significant role in their success as homeland security leaders. Several women cited previous experience in homeland security related fields, including law enforcement, as bringing credibility to a leader's status in the profession. In fact, several women indicated that not having previous experience in the military or a paramilitary career field could hinder a person's ability to acquire leadership positions in homeland security. It may be difficult to lead in homeland security related fields, without having served on the "front lines" or "in the field" prior to acquiring leadership status.

c. Having the Right Education

One of the only ways to overcome a lack of extensive experience in previous homeland security positions is to acquire a strong educational background in homeland security. Programs like the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School were cited as highly coveted degree programs that could spring board individuals, including women, into homeland security leadership positions.

d. Having a Clear Vision

Leaders who have succeeded in homeland security have vision for the future, and they work forward with that vision in mind. These leaders set goals and objectives for the future, and consistently strive to achieve success. They meet personal expectations of success, as well as the expectations of their teams. In today's homeland security environment, leaders must be able to sustain programs and continue progress in a harsh economy with reduced funding. Additionally, today's workforce has evolved and is changing rapidly so leaders must be able to have strategic vision about the future.

e. Possessing Strong Leadership Skills and Traits

Successful leaders in homeland security possess several common traits and leadership skills. Among those, collaboration is cited as being the most important and useful. Leaders must also be able to communicate well through extensive interpersonal interactions. The majority of the women interviewed credited their work ethic with their success, and indicated that they worked extremely hard throughout their careers. These leaders also demonstrated that they were fearless and unafraid to take risks.

f. Overcoming Obstacles and Barriers

Obstacles and barriers seem less frequent or problematic for women today, including in the field of homeland security. However, some do exist, and some are unique to women. For the women interviewed who began their careers in the 1970s or earlier, significant barriers and obstacles had to be overcome for them to achieve leadership.

When these leaders encountered barriers, large or small, they did not stop. They pushed forward, through force, through legal avenues, through whatever means necessary to reach the other side.

g. Taking Advantage of Opportunity

Homeland security provided a ripe opportunity for leaders, including women, after 9/11. When the DHS was created, and programs were being developing nationally and locally, one interview subject described the situation as a “leadership vacuum.” Leaders were needed to pilot this new ship and guide what was to become homeland security. Women, and men alike, took advantage of these opportunities and many excelled as leaders. Opportunities opened, and individuals stepped forward to fill the voids where leaders were needed.

B. DISCUSSIONS

Several areas were addressed in the interviews but were not presented as findings or recommendations. These issues, including perceived differences between male and female leadership styles, appointed and career leaders, and the possible different leadership competencies in homeland security, are ripe for further research and briefly discussed.

1. Male and Female Leadership Skills or Styles

Most of the women interviewed explained that while men and women may possess some different traits, they were actually personality traits, not leadership traits. The leadership differences between men and women may really be more related to style, instead of specific leadership traits. As one woman stated, “it’s the same leadership skills whether you wear pants or a skirt.”

2. Appointed vs. Career Leaders

The majority of those interviewed agreed that success was measured differently for those leaders appointed as opposed to those who were career by stating in most cases that appointed leaders had political objectives and requirements that usually had higher

priorities than those held by career leaders. However, with both questions, many women who answered yes agreed that differences in the requirements or in how success is measured should not exist between appointed and career homeland security leaders.

3. Is Homeland Security Different?

General consensus among the women interviewed was that leadership requirements were not different in homeland security than other professions. However, the difficulty in achieving leadership between professions varied greatly. For example, some women coming from emergency management backgrounds shared that it was harder to achieve leadership roles as a woman in homeland security, due to the male-dominated fire and law enforcement foundation of homeland security. Most of the women interviewed with an emergency management background were in emergency management during the expansion of homeland security after 9/11, and saw the increased need for collaboration between agencies. Some women interviewed felt that women held an advantage over the traditional law enforcement and fire organizations due to collaborative experience gained in emergency management. When the individuals interviewed were asked if they thought homeland security has different leadership competencies than other professions, most indicated that they did not. The majority indicated that while homeland security may be a high-pressure environment, requiring dynamic leadership, the same could be true of leadership in most professions. Leading people is leading people, as one woman pointed out.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN LEADERS

1. Mentors and Sponsors—Know the Difference and Get Both

The research presented clearly demonstrates the value of mentors to the development and success of leaders. Mentors and methods of mentoring were discussed in detail in most of the interviews conducted. A topic not discussed specifically by title and defined, but presented through narrative and anecdotal stories, was the value of sponsors. A difference in mentors and sponsors occurred, and both have a place in women's leadership, past, present and future. The book, *How Remarkable Women Lead*,

by Joanna Barsh and Sue Cranston, states sponsors are defined as individuals that “have your back,” and create opportunities for individuals to excel.⁶⁵ Sponsors help open doors, assist in overcoming barriers, and help individuals navigate the path to leadership. Mentors are role models and teachers who will assist in developing leadership skills and attributes. Individuals who want to excel as leaders, male or female, should find mentors and sponsors to help them achieve success.

2. Be a Mentor, Be a Role Model, Be a Sponsor

Leaders who make it to the top must be willing to help others get there. Several of the individuals interviewed for this research indicated they had only male mentors because no female mentors were available at the time, which is no longer the case. The numbers may still be lower, but they are out there. Mentors come in many shapes and forms. By simply being a good and successful leader, an individual is serving as a role model and mentor to their team, their peers, and even to individuals they will never meet. As Kathleen O’Toole, former police commissioner of Boston and Secretary of Public Safety for Massachusetts shared during her interview, “I can’t think of anything more important or rewarding than developing the next generation of leaders.”⁶⁶ Leaders like O’Toole, who happened to be the first female Public Safety Secretary of Massachusetts, as well as the first female police commissioner of Boston, and also worked on the peace process in Northern Ireland, have opened doors for others to step through, and paved the path that lies ahead. These leaders are role models and mentors, and serve as examples of what can be for any female leader who may think the path too daunting. Each of the 14 women interviewed for this research mentored the author, without naming it. Simply by being successful, sharing their stories, and listening to hers, they provide motivation to succeed.

⁶⁵ Joanna Barsh, Susie Cranston, and Geoffrey Lewis, *How Remarkable Women Lead: The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Books, 2009), 165.

⁶⁶ Kathleen O’Toole, in discussion with the author, Covington, GA, December 6, 2012.

3. Speak Up, Step Up

In meetings, classrooms, and boardrooms, women can be reluctant to speak up for many reasons, and several are listed in Barsh and Cranston's book. Reasons they list include fear of being found unworthy or ridiculed.⁶⁷ Individuals who are not afraid to speak up, and who show no hesitation to voice an opinion or thought will hijack meetings and conversations. If a woman wants her voice to be heard, she must speak up. Nancy Dragani, head of Ohio's Emergency Management Agency, explained that at times, she would be the only person in a room willing to raise her hand and ask a question. According to Dragani, "I don't care, if I don't know the answer I'm going to ask the question, and I'm not really worried about the fact that somebody may perceive me as not knowing the answer if it's an important enough question to put on the table."⁶⁸ Dragani felt no fear or doubt or ridicule, instead she speaks up, asks questions, and makes sure her voice is heard. Even if it is the only voice heard in the room. Fear should also not get in the way of women stepping up to accept difficult assignments and challenges. One woman interviewed, who is a successful federal homeland security leader, attributes volunteering for challenging assignments as the most important factor to her acquiring leadership positions. She asked for opportunities, took assignments that others did not want, and completed the toughest missions. That fearlessness and willingness to run towards a challenge has served leaders well, including several of the women interviewed for this research. Chief Rosemary Cloud, Fire Chief for the City of East Point, Georgia, and the first African American female fire chief in the United States shared how important it is for women to be confident and "step up to the plate." Early in her career, Chief Cloud had a mentor, a male fire chief, who encouraged her to accept challenges, even when she thought she was not ready. He would tell her "you are ready; you've got everything you need to do this."⁶⁹ Chief Cloud discussed that women can often times be

⁶⁷ Barsh, Cranston, and Lewis, *How Remarkable Women Lead: The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life*, 197.

⁶⁸ Nancy Dragani, in discussion with the author, Atlanta, GA, December 5, 2012.

⁶⁹ Rosemary Cloud, in discussion with the author, Atlanta, GA, November 14, 2012.

harder on themselves than others are, and will let this hesitancy and fear, or feeling of “not being quite ready yet,” stop them from taking charge when opportunities arise.

4. Be Responsible for Mistakes, Take Credit for Successes

Mistakes will happen. Failures will occur. The fear of making mistakes should not stop leaders from taking chances. Several leaders interviewed listed decisiveness as being a trait of successful homeland security leaders. Making decisions, often times swiftly and with urgency, means that sometimes decisions will be wrong. Situations will not always go according to plan. When a leader makes a mistake, that leader must accept the consequences of the decision. A successful leader is not necessarily the leader who is right 100% of the time. Instead, as one leader explained, taking ownership and handling consequences demonstrates credibility and integrity in a leader. Just like the fear of ridicule or unworthiness should not hold a leader back, neither should the fear of making a mistake. None of the 14 leaders interviewed professed to be perfect. Each described some measure of mistake, but explained the importance of accepting those mistakes and learning from each. On the other hand, several leaders mentioned the importance of women taking credit for successes and accomplishments, and sharing it with others as appropriate. One of the first issues noted while conducting these interviews was the humility and lack of ego of each of the women interviewed. These 14 leaders represented a breadth of experience, knowledge, and accomplishments that left the author awestruck at times. These were pioneers, trailblazers, and leaders, who helped build the foundations of today’s homeland security enterprise. Yet, when asked if they considered themselves to be successful leaders, most answered humbly and several stated that they were uncomfortable “bragging” about themselves. In, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*, authors Alice Eagly and Linda Carli describe this discomfort as possibly occurring because self promoting behavior may be seen as non-feminine, and not nice.⁷⁰ In other words, niceness is a feminine trait often attributed to feminine leaders, and bragging is not typically considered nice. Sometimes, balancing an

⁷⁰ Alice Hendrickson Eagly and Linda Lorene Carli, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), 168.

image of niceness at the same time as demonstrating credibility may be difficult. When asked about different traits of male and female leaders, one leader shared that at times, women are perceived as nice by not credible, while men are perceived as credible, but not nice. This perception is not necessarily true, but may help explain why women may or may not want to shatter perceptions of “nicety” by talking about their success. However, Eagly and Carli believe that women’s modesty is a reflection of low confidence.⁷¹ If confidence is an important trait for successful leaders, then perhaps women should show less modesty when it comes to their successes, but be willing to share credit with team members and others who were a part of the achievement.

5. Don’t Sacrifice Your Principles and Boundaries

Acquiring leadership takes time for most. Rising through the ranks, a leader changes and evolves. Ambition can change people, but integrity should never be compromised. Kathleen O’Toole explains that a leader has to go home at the end of the day and look in the mirror. With the pressures that come as the leader rises through the ranks, it is critical that principles are never sacrificed. Another interview subject stated it a different way by saying that women must be careful not to “lose themselves” while working through challenges. Additionally, while the challenges, obstacles, and barriers that exist for women in the workforce have decreased, and are different, some still exist. In most cases discussed and shared in the interviews, the challenges unique to women relating specifically to gender are more covert and difficult to define. These challenges include unwanted sexual advances, harassment, and covert attacks against personal or professional credibility. One interview subject shared that it is important for women, especially in a male-dominated environment, to set boundaries early and stick to them. Another interviewee shared that when she was placed in a position in which a boundary was crossed, and inappropriate remarks made, she immediately addressed the issue, and made it clear that it was unacceptable behavior. These instances will occur. The means by which they are addressed may be different, and are personal for individuals. Some of the

⁷¹ Eagly and Carli, *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*, 169.

women interviewed addressed issues of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination through legal means or by filing workplace complaints. Others addressed these issues by directly challenging the aggressor. Others dealt with the issue by enlisting the assistance or support from a mentor or sponsor. The common factor is that each woman who encountered these challenges addressed them, and effectively removed them from blocking their paths to success.

6. Find Your Balance

Work-life balance has changed over time, but is still a consideration for leaders, male and female. It is more common in today's workforce, including in homeland security related professions, for men and women to share family responsibilities, including childcare. Several of the women interviewed stated that they did not achieve work-life balance until later in their careers, while some indicated that they never really achieved a balance. Several of the women interviewed do not have children, and stated that having children would likely have prevented them from acquiring the leadership positions they held. However, these women stated that this was their choice and a sacrifice they made willingly. Others stated that having a work-life balance was a real challenge in homeland security related jobs, where hours can be long, travel necessary, and stress high. Finding ways to achieve this balance is important for women. Several of the women interviewed talked about the importance of agencies having flexible practices, such as alternate work schedules and telecommuting options for employees. Leaders can influence such policies, which benefit all employees, not just women with children. Work-life balance is not the only important balance of which women to be conscious. To make themselves more competitive, women should strive to achieve the right balance or experience, education, skills, and attributes to acquire the jobs that they want to obtain. Having a goal or objective, and building the resume necessary to achieve it, is critical for success. As one leader told me, "the sky's the limit."

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This field of study could be improved and expanded by further research. The sample of research subjects could be expanded to include more women, as well as men. A more thorough research design to include a sample based on a percentage of female leaders in homeland security could provide more empirical data regarding the experiences of these leaders. To identify a more generalizable statistical sample, the population of female leaders in homeland security would need to be identified, which means that the homeland security profession would need to be defined so that the organizations and leaders can be identified. Defining what disciplines and organizations have homeland security responsibilities has not been accomplished on a national level, and is largely a matter of opinion that varies among practitioners. Interviews with male leaders, following the same script as with women, would also be beneficial. Comparing male and female leadership attributes is difficult when only analyzing one gender. This set of interviews asked women to discuss female leadership traits, and to explain perceived differences between leaders based on gender. Only one perspective was gained by interviewing solely female leaders. Additional research to include more specific demographic data about the leaders interviewed would be beneficial. For example, several leaders discussed generational issues as possibly impacting leadership issues, including gender related issues. Research conducted to address these generational issues may further explain gender related leadership issues, as they exist today, and how they may have changed over time. One interview subject stated that her experiences have differed, as they relate to gender, based on different areas of the country where she has worked. For example, she experienced less gender bias in the Pacific region of the country, versus in areas of the mid-west or south. Gender-related leadership issues as they relate to geographic locations could also provide further insight into current gender issues.

VII. CONCLUSION

While women still face many obstacles in achieving the equal numbers of men in the homeland security workforce, success has not eluded them. While the sample size for this study was small, it represents a good cross-section of the homeland security profession. Of the fourteen women interviewed, four represent federal agencies, five represent state agencies, and five represent local agencies, all with homeland security responsibilities. Eight of those women are still actively employed by these government agencies, while the remaining six are retired or no longer employed with the government. Even in the case of those six, most are still engaged in homeland security through the private sector in some capacity, or in an academic setting. Collectively, these 14 women have over 330 years of service in a homeland security or public safety related environment, and the average time of service for them was close to 25 years. The sample size may be small, but its impact is certainly not.

Challenges, barriers, and obstacles still exist for women today, especially in male-dominated fields like those in the homeland security enterprise. The barriers of today, however, are not the same as the barriers most of these women encountered, and broke through, in the early days of their career. Some of these women were entering law enforcement, fire, and emergency management in the 1970s and 1980s, when women were first introduced to the professions. They encountered overt challenges and barriers, some harsh and cruel. Chief Rosemary Cloud with the East Point Fire Department in Georgia described challenges that she encountered, including individuals tampering with her food, as well as playing games by not allowing her to use certain equipment that she had to use to maintain certification, and so forth. When asked about these barriers, and how she overcame them, Chief Cloud simply stated, “You know I don’t stop at a barrier.” This attitude was found to be true in most of the interviews conducted. The women who encountered barriers and obstacles simply did not let them stop them. Like Susan Reinertson, a former FEMA Regional Administrator stated, “I just plow ahead, not paying attention to a barrier.” If these women encountered the glass ceiling or other

barriers, they simply found a way around it, or burst right through them. Others encountered more difficulty when trying to do that, and for some, the barriers have proven to be unbreakable, but they are still trying.

The leadership styles and collaborative communication skills of women are beneficial in today's homeland security environments. Many of the leaders interviewed discussed the necessity of leaders being able to understand and relate to the diverse professional cultures involved in homeland security. One leader explained that homeland security is not about one person, or entity. Instead, it is a diverse, dynamic field and leaders must balance the needs of multiple organizations and individuals to be effective. Collaboration is essential to bridging the divides in homeland security and building relationships to move agencies and programs forward. While the leaders interviewed mostly indicated that collaboration was a skill that many women leaders possess, it is certainly not a trait solely attributed to women. Several of the leaders described that men can also be good collaborators, and they have experienced both men and women as possessing that leadership trait.

One interesting theme that emerged in several of the interviews regarded whether successful women in homeland security must assume more male leadership styles and traits. Several individuals stated that earlier in their careers, women who succeeded in more male-dominated environments, like law enforcement, assumed more male leadership styles associated with strength, autocracy, dominance, and callousness to succeed. In these cases, the women suppressed the soft skills, like collaboration, caring, and compassion. These soft skills were perceived, and can still be, as weakness. Now, with today's changing workforce, in which more women are working, and changes in family and child-care responsibilities, these soft skills are more frequently recognized and appreciated by employees, according to some of the women interviewed. Employees want leaders to care and have consideration for matters, such as work-life balance, morale, and employee satisfaction. The leaders interviewed see this situation as a fundamental change in that a return of these soft skills to leadership possibly contributes

to women's success. While these skills were once suppressed, now they are embraced, but balanced with other leadership traits, such as strength and decisiveness to make a more-rounded leader.

Fewer women hold leadership positions in homeland security mainly because fewer women work in the profession. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports, in 2011, 26.6% of all law enforcement employees in the United States were women, and only 11.8% of police officers are women.⁷² Only four, or 8%, of state homeland security advisors are women according to the DHS website listing these advisors.⁷³ Likewise, only four women serve as state emergency management directors according to a directory acquired from the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA).⁷⁴ According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics presented earlier in this document, only 4% of full-time firefighters in the United States are women. Until more women are employed in the homeland security professions, the number of female leaders in the profession will logically remain low. What will it take for more women to enter the profession? Based on personal experiences and the information learned from the leaders interviewed, it will take several things. First, it will take time. The workforce is changing. Women have been in the workforce associated with homeland security a shorter amount of time than men. As the population changes, and as more women recognize that homeland security is a viable career option, they will enter the profession. For that to happen, homeland security must be marketed as a serious career option to women, which should happen in school classrooms, and college campuses. The women who have made it as leaders in this profession are role models to others, and can reach other women and inspire them to enter professions that may not enter their sphere of possibility. Kathleen O'Toole shared a story about a time as Police Commissioner when she spoke to a school assembly of fifth graders. She said a little girl raised her hand and asked, "How old were you when you decided you wanted to be a police officer?" O'Toole told her, "I did not

⁷² FBI Uniform Crime Reports, "Crime in the U.S. 2011, Full Time Law Enforcement Employees."

⁷³ Department of Homeland Security, "State Homeland Security Advisors, Points of Contacts."

⁷⁴ State Director list acquired from the National Emergency Management Association.

decide until I was out of college because women could not be police officers when I was your age.” The little girl looked at O’Toole in confusion and simply asked, “Why not?” This comment struck O’Toole as wonderful because whole generations of kids are growing up without knowing barriers ever existed. She believes that if more women leaders get out there, demonstrate their skills, and are recognized for their contributions, the natural evolution is that more women will follow.

What about what started this journey? Statistics provided by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security proved the theory that fewer women are applying for the Master’s program than men. Only 19.8% of all applicants to the program are women. However, 39% of the women who apply for the program are admitted, while 31% of men who apply are admitted. According to staff at the center, no variable is scored for gender in the application process. In other words, the women who apply to the program are preparing strong applications, and come with strong credentials, background and recommendations. This data should be encouraging for any woman in the homeland security profession who considers pursuing this opportunity for an advanced degree. Considering that many of the women interviewed state that education and experience are essential contributing factors to succeeding in this field, the opportunity is one that can only help.

The leaders that came before, several of whom were interviewed for this research, have paved a trail for others to follow. They helped build the foundations of today’s homeland security apparatus across the country. Barriers were broken, obstacles were removed, and stereotypes were shattered because of their efforts. The way is open, the bridge is laid before us, and the sky is the limit. It may not be easy, but homeland security is not easy. Homeland security includes wicked problems, and leaders, male or female, must be equipped and ready to embrace the challenges associated with addressing those problems. Any situation that is easy is rarely world changing. The road less traveled may be bumpy and treacherous, but it leads to uncharted territory, where leaders dwell.

APPENDIX A.

Women in Homeland Security Leadership Mapping Interview Questions to Research Questions

Research Question	Evaluation Criteria Interview Questions			Narrative
	Interview Question—Level 1	Interview Question—Level 2	Interview Question—Level 3	
Are women succeeding in homeland security leadership positions?	How do you define success as a leader?	Do you consider yourself to be a successful homeland security leader?	How do you measure your success?	To help define success as a leader.
			In what areas do you feel you have not been successful as a leader?	To help define success as a leader.
		How do you measure the success of other leaders?	Is success based on the opinions of others?	To help define success as a leader.
	Do you have leadership experience in other professions?	What were those experiences?	How were you successful?	To help define success as a leader in other professions to compare with homeland security.
			How were you not successful?	To help define success as a leader in other professions to compare with homeland security.
		How were these leadership positions different from those in homeland security?	Were leadership requirements different?	To compare requirements between other professions and homeland security.
			Was leadership more difficult to achieve?	To compare requirements between other professions and homeland security.

Research Question	Evaluation Criteria Interview Questions			Narrative
	Interview Question—Level 1	Interview Question—Level 2	Interview Question—Level 3	
What reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security	What factors have contributed to you acquiring leadership position(s) in	What specific leadership skills have helped you as a homeland security leader?	Have other factors, besides individual leadership skills, have contributed to your leadership status and success?	Identify factors that contribute to leadership success.

Research Question	Evaluation Criteria Interview Questions			Narrative
	Interview Question—Level 1	Interview Question—Level 2	Interview Question—Level 3	
leadership positions?	homeland security?	Do you think homeland security has different leadership competencies?	Have leadership needs changed in homeland security since its inception?	Establish if homeland security leadership needs are different than other professions.
			Do these different leadership competencies make it easier for women to succeed in homeland security?	Establish whether or not women may have an advantage in homeland security over other professions.
		Were you directly appointed to your current position or did you go through formal interview, hiring, process (career leader)?	Do you think leadership requirements are different for appointed vs. career leaders?	Determine if appointed and career leaders have different requirements.
			Do you think success is measured differently for appointed vs. career leaders?	Determine if appointed and career leaders have different requirements.
	What leadership traits would you attribute to successful homeland security leaders?	Of these traits, which do you feel that you possess?	In your experience, do women generally possess these traits?	Identify traits that help leaders succeed in homeland security and whether or not women possess them.
			Do you regularly use these traits in your day to day leadership role?	Determine if women possess and use these traits in leadership roles.
		Do women and possess different leadership traits?	Which of these traits do you believe women demonstrate more than men in leadership roles?	Attempt to determine if women have an advantage in this area.
			How important are these traits for successful leadership?	Determine importance of these traits to practitioners.

Research Question	Evaluation Criteria Interview Questions			Narrative
	Interview Question—Level 1	Interview Question—Level 2	Interview Question—Level 3	
What reasons can explain the success of women in homeland security	What obstacles do women face in homeland security?	What challenges have you experienced as a homeland security leader?	Have you experienced those same challenges in other professions?	Determine if challenges for women are unique to homeland security.
			Are those challenges unique to women? If so, which, or all of them?	Determine if women and men face the same obstacles and challenges.
		What barriers do you, or have you, encountered to become a	What about in other professions?	Determine if barriers for women are unique to homeland security.

Research Question	Evaluation Criteria Interview Questions			Narrative
	Interview Question—Level 1	Interview Question—Level 2	Interview Question—Level 3	
leadership positions?		homeland security leader?	How have you addressed or overcome those barriers?	Identify ways that successful women have addressed barriers.
	What other factors may impact women's opportunities for leadership positions within homeland security?	Have any other factors (work-life balance, child care, etc.) impacted your path to leadership?	Are these factors unique to homeland security, or have you experienced them in other professions?	Determine if other factors impact women's leadership success in homeland security compared to other professions.
			Do you think these factors have changed over time?	Determine if these factors have improved, lessened or changed over time.
	How can female leaders help other female leaders in homeland security?	Do you provide any mentoring or other assistance to existing or up and coming leaders?	Is this extended to men and women?	Identify programs or factors that help women succeed as leaders.
			Do these leaders seek assistance?	Determine if up and coming leaders are seeking help actively from leaders already in place.
			What mentoring do you provide?	Determine the role that mentor may play in leadership success.
			Have you had mentors in your career?	Determine the value of mentors.
		Are you aware of any formal mentoring or leadership development programs specifically for homeland security professionals?	Are these programs for men and women?	Establishing if men and women have the same mentoring opportunities?
		What advice would you give to female homeland security leaders?		Establish the guidance that existing leaders would provide to future leaders.
	What do successful leaders contribute to homeland security?			Establish why leadership matters in homeland security.

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APPENDIX B.

Invitation to Participate in Research

Dear Homeland Security Leader:

You are invited to participate in an interview as part of a study designed to explore the success of women in homeland security leadership positions. I am conducting this study for my thesis in partial fulfillment for a master's degree at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security. This study will explore whether women are succeeding in homeland security leadership positions and examine reasons that may explain the success of women in homeland security. The entire process may take up to two hours to complete, but the interview is expected to take approximately one hour. The interview can be conducted over the phone unless arrangements can be made for a personal interview. Participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate at any time. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will be provided a copy of the transcription from interviews for review and approval prior to any published research.

Your participation is voluntary. If you chose to participate you may withdraw at any time without penalty. The information obtained during this study will be kept confidential. Your name and current or former homeland security related job position(s) will be recorded to assist in coding of data collected. However, participants will not be identified in the published study unless they consent to be quoted or identified. Data collected will be password protected and will be secured with the researcher, or in a locked office, at all times. There is minimal chance that data collected will be compromised.

If you have any questions or comments about the research, or you experience you should contact Principal Investigator, *Dr. Rudy Darken*, 831-656-7588, darken@nps.edu. Questions about your rights as a research subject or any other concerns may be addressed to the Navy Postgraduate School IRB Chair, CAPT John Schmidt, USN, 831-656-3864, jkschmidt@nps.edu.

If you would like to participate in this study, please email me at jwwest@nps.edu or call me at (404)403-8139 to schedule the interview. All reasonable accommodations will be made to meet your scheduling needs and to maximize the use of your time. Interview questions will be provided to you immediately so that you may have time to prepare prior to the actual interview. Again, you may choose not to participate, or opt out of the interview, at any time. You may also choose not to answer all of the interview questions. You will not directly benefit from this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Jonna West

Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security

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APPENDIX C.

Consent to Participate in Research

Naval Postgraduate School Consent to Participate in Research

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled *Exploring the Role of Women in Homeland Security Leadership*. The purpose of the research is study the role that women play in the homeland security profession, and to explore the success that these women experience in leadership roles.

Procedures. This research will be conducted through personal interviews, either in person or over the telephone. Interviews will include questions regarding your experiences and success as a female homeland security leader. Personal identifying data will be collected and stored to aid in the coding of data, but participants will have the option of not being identified in the research. Interviews will be audio recorded in order to aid in the accurate collection of data. The interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and provided to participants prior to the publication of data collected. There is minimal risk that data collected could be mismanaged.

The entire process may take up to two hours, but interviews are expected to take one hour to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you participate, you are free to skip any questions or stop participating at any time without penalty. The alternative to participating is to not participate.

You may receive a copy of the completed research by contacting the Researcher at jwwest@nps.edu or (404) 403-8139.

Location. Interviews will take place in person or over the phone, whichever is logistically reasonable and most convenient for participants.

Cost. There is no cost to participate in this research study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you choose to participate you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study. You will not be penalized in any way or lose any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled if you choose not to participate in this study or to withdraw. The alternative to participating in the research is to not participate in the research.

Potential Risks and Discomforts. This research will include questions related to experiences that you have had with regards to employment and gender. Questions will be provided to you prior to the interview for review. After reviewing the questions, you may choose not to participate in the interview. Questions are directly related to experiences,

positive or negative, as they relate your gender and how gender has impacted your employment. You will be asked questions regarding your personal insights on gender related employment restrictions and experiences. You may find such questions uncomfortable. If responses to questions demonstrate negative experiences related to gender, you may feel that the information could impact your career and positions. You have the option of non-attribution to protect you from identification. You do not have to be identified in the research if you think identification may cause you harm. You also have the option of not participating if you feel the information could be viewed negatively.

Anticipated Benefits. The anticipated benefit of this study is to add to the body of research about homeland security leadership, specifically the experiences of women in the homeland security profession. This research will be a contribution to gender studies and gender-related leadership literature with the homeland security profession. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research.

Compensation for Participation. No tangible compensation will be given.

Confidentiality & Privacy Act. Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Electronic files will be stored on secure, password protected computers, which will be stored in locked offices when not in the direct possession of the researcher. Paper files will be secured in locked file cabinets stored in locked offices.

If you consent to be identified by name in this study, any reference to or quote by you will be published in the final research finding only after your review and approval. If you do not agree, then you will be identified broadly by discipline and/or rank, (for example, “fire chief”), unless such descriptions provide information easily leading to your identification. In that case, you will be identified broadly by your profession (for example, “a homeland security leader”).

☐ I consent to be identified by name in this research study.

☐ I do not consent to be identified by name in this research study.

☐ I consent to being recorded for this research study.

☐ I do not consent to be recorded for this research study.

Points of Contact. If you have any questions or comments about the research, or you experience an injury or have questions about any discomforts that you experience while taking part in this study please contact the Principal Investigator, *Dr. Rudy Darken*, 831–656–7588, darken@nps.edu. Questions about your rights as a research subject or any other

concerns may be addressed to the Navy Postgraduate School IRB Chair, CAPT John Schmidt, USN, 831-656-3864, jkschmid@nps.edu.

Statement of Consent. I have read the information provided above. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all the questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been provided a copy of this form for my records and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this research and signing this form, I do not waive any of my legal rights.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

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